# THE ADVENT

. VIII. No. 4 November 1951

*A Quarterly Devoted to the Exposition of Sri Aurobindo's Vision of the Future*

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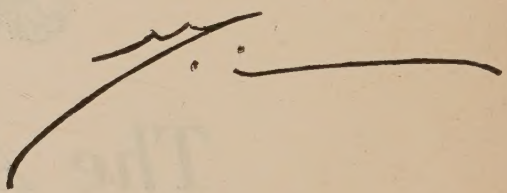
# *The Advent*

*No problem exists by itself, but only as a function of all the rest. The solution, if it is to be true, must neglect none.*



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November 1951

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*Opening* is a thing that happens by itself by sincerity of will and aspiration. It means to be able to receive the higher forces that come from the Mother.

SRI AUROBINDO

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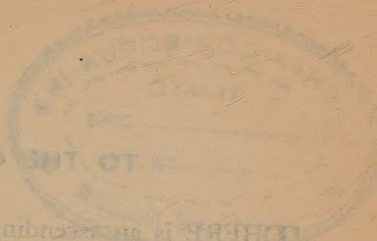


## TO THE CHILDREN OF THE ASHRAM

## TO THE CHILDREN OF THE ASHRAM

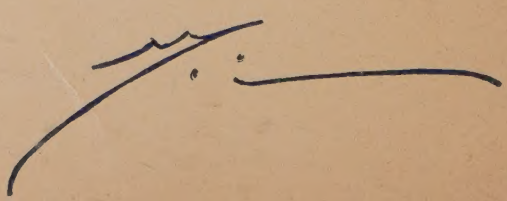
THERE is an ascending evolution in nature which goes from the stone to the plant, from the plant to the animal, from the animal to man. Because man is, for the moment, the last rung at the summit of the ascending evolution, he considers himself as the final stage in this ascension and believes there can be nothing on earth superior to him. In that he is mistaken. In his physical nature he is yet almost wholly an animal, a thinking and speaking animal, but still an animal in his material habits and instincts. Undoubtedly, nature cannot be satisfied with such an imperfect result; she endeavours to bring out a being who will be to man what man is to the animal, a being who will remain a man in its external from, and yet whose consciousness will rise far above the mental and its slavery to ignorance.

Sri Aurobindo came upon earth to teach this truth to men. He told them that man is only a transitional being living in a mental consciousness, but with the possibility of acquiring a new consciousness, the Truth-consciousness, and capable of living a life perfectly harmonious, good and beautiful, happy and fully conscious. During the whole of his life upon earth, Sri Aurobindo gave all his time to establish in himself this consciousness he called supramental, and to help those gathered around him to realise it.

You have the immense privilege of having come quite young to the Ashram, that is to say, still plastic and capable of being moulded according to this new ideal and thus become the representatives of the new race. Here, in the Ashram, you are in the most favourable conditions with regard to the environment, the influence, the teaching and the example, to awaken in you this supramental consciousness and to grow according to its law.

Now, all depends on your will and your sincerity. If you have the will no more to belong to ordinary humanity, no more to be merely evolved animals; if your will is to become men of the new race realising Sri Aurobindo's supramental ideal, living a new and higher life upon a new earth, you will find here all the necessary help to achieve your purpose; you will profit fully by your stay in the Ashram and eventually become living examples for the world.

24th July, 1951



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The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - - *Sri Aurobindo.*

## EDITORIAL*

### TOTAL TRANSFORMATION DEMANDS TOTAL REJECTION

TO a positive side in the sadhana, there must also be a negative one. Realisation or experience, on one side, must be accompanied by rejection of things that oppose it, on the other. People wonder why a beautiful experience fades away too soon or does not repeat easily, why a happy condition does not continue long but is followed almost inevitably by a condition of despond.

The reason is very simple. The experience or realisation is not a total one, that is to say, it belongs to a part only of the nature and is not shared by other parts. The sadhak is not of one piece: the whole of his nature is not worked to the same pitch and amplitude, it is not equally responsive everywhere. Thus, when the psychic brings forward an experience and the inner consciousness is full of the light and energy and joy and faith, even then, in the background or by the side, if you are vigilant and observe carefully, you will see that the mind, the external mind, has its reservations or continues to move in its accustomed way. It looks askance at the experience, criticises or doubts; or it tries to understand or explain in its own

* Based on the Mother's talks

terms, seize it within its frame of comprehension. Or else, the vital rises up and tries to get hold of the experience and utilise it for its own purposes; it is enjoyed as a tasty food, made to serve the vital's ambition or vanity, some lower ignorant egoistic urge. Or again, the physical, the body consciousness, may not at all participate in the experience; it may remain indifferent, listless, lethargic with no impulse or enthusiasm to carry out in practice the experience of the inner consciousness. Any of these drags or cross-currents is sufficient to maim and diminish and finally even wipe out the experience: and usually all the three are there to combine and reinforce each other's efforts to do the mischief.

The remedy is to turn back and hold to the spot of light that is there in the consciousness, the clarity or the aspiration that belongs to the inner and higher being. That has to be used as a torch, as a staff to support and guide you in your periods of darkness and vacillation. That beam of burning light should be thrown, in turn, upon those parts in you that besiege with their obscurity and inconscience, doubt and arrogance, the realisation that comes, the progress on the way. It must be done with firmness, vigilance and perseverance. The mixture has to be sorted out, the dross separated, kept on one side and the pure element on the other: the impurities have to be put under the flame-light to melt, burn away and be eliminated. And this means an ardent sincerity, for that is the tinder which keeps the fire alight.

And sincerity demands often a severe dealing with oneself; it involves accepting an inconvenience, inflicting even a painful pressure. One has to be prepared for such a turn, one has to welcome it even at times. The part that is unwilling or refractory has to feel the wrench, if it is to be cleansed and corrected.

Indeed, the experience of joy in the very process of suffering is a common experience with the saint and the martyr. We know of innumerable instances where the fierce torture of the flesh was drowned, overwhelmed in the ecstasy of the inner aspiration; the vital enthusiasm drawn from the inner flame suffuses, courses through the nerves and tissues with such energy and impetus that it effectively blocks out the invading reaction of pain. It is a discipline that has its value even for a sadhak of the sunlit path.

## THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE COLLECTIVE

An integral sadhana cannot be confined to the individual alone; an element

of collectivity must enter into it. An individual is not an isolated being in any way. There are, of course, schools of Yoga and philosophy that seek to isolate the individual, consider him as an entity hemmed in by his own consciousness; indeed they view the individuals as all distinct and separate, each a closed circle or sphere, they may barely touch each other but never interpenetrate or intercommunicate. Each stands as a solitary island, all together forming the vast archipelago of the universe. This is a position, no doubt, that can be acquired by a kind of discipline of the consciousness, though not to a great perfection; but it is not a natural or necessary poise. Normally, individuals do merge into each other and form one weft of give and take. A desire, an impulse, even a thought that rises in you, goes out of you, overflows you and spreads around even to the extreme limit of the earth, like a Hertzian wave. Again, any movement in any person anywhere in the world would come to you, penetrate you, raise a similar vibration in you, even though you may not so recognise it and consider it as something exclusively personal to you. You send out vibrations into the world and the world sends out vibrations into you. Individual life is the meeting-ground of these outgoing and incoming forces. It is precisely to avoid this circle or cycle of world-vibrations that the older Yogis used to *leave the world*, away from society, retire to mountain tops, into the virgin forest where they hoped to find themselves alone and aloof, to be single with the Single Self. This is a way out, but it is not the only or the best solution. It is not the best solution, for although apparently one is alone on the hilltop, in the desert crypt, or the forest womb, one always carries with oneself a whole world within, the normal nature with all its instincts and impulses, reactions, memories and hopes: you cut away the outside, run away from it, but what about the outside that is within you? The taste for a tasty thing does not drop with the removal of the object. Secondly, such an individual solution, even if it were possible, would still be a purely personal matter and, in the ultimate analysis, egoistic. It is why the Buddha refused to enter definitely into Nirvana and withdrew from the brink to work among men. Indeed, the real solution is elsewhere. It is not to withdraw or go away but to find within the orbit here a centre, a focus of consciousness which is not controlled by the outside forces but can control them, which is not coloured by them but can lend them its own luminosity. That is the soul or the psychic centre.

And this centre is not an isolated entity in its nature: it is, as it were, a universal centre, that is to say, it links itself indissolubly in a secret sense

of identity with all other centres. For this self is only one of the selves through which the One Self has multiplied itself for a varied self-objectification. The light that shines here, the fire that burns here and the delight that flows here illumine, purify and revitalise not only the individual in which it dwells, but move abroad and extend into the other individuals with which it lives in spiritual identity.

## HOW TO WAIT

"If you know how to wait, you gain time". Usually, when you are about to do a thing, the impulse is to rush towards it and rush it through; between the idea and the execution you do not want to leave any gap. You are in a haste to see the thing done. You do not care to pause and look about you, view and weigh the conditions and circumstances, think out the best way of working towards the goal. The result of the hustle is failure, very often dead failure. You have to begin over again. You may even have to begin over and over again if you do not learn the lesson given. Evidently, you lose time, lose energy and lose your success. On the contrary, what you have to do before you actually take up your work is not to jump at it, but understand what it means and involves, have before your mind's eye a clear figure or pattern of the thing to be undertaken, not to go upon a vague and indefinite notion about it, something that will take shape—that will take care of itself—as you proceed. You must have a clear conception of your work and also you must find out the exact ways and means, have at your elbow the best possible implements. It is only when you are fully armed with the necessary equipment that you can be sure of success without any waste of time or energy.

And then there is a time, a propitious time for everything. A thing cannot be done at any time, it has its own appointed hour; you cannot succeed even if you attempt a hundred times before that hour strikes. But when the time is ripe, how easily a thing seems to get done! In what does this ripeness of time consist, what are the marks of the propitious hour? It is when you are in complete possession of the right instruments and when the disposition of circumstances is such that they concur to help and execute and not mar and obstruct. But how to find out or recognise when such conditions are available? Not by your mind or external reasoning. You must have the intuition, an instinctive perception of the situation. Always the indication is there in the very poise of your consciousness. That is to

say, when it is filled with a great calm, trust and confidence, a luminous concentration.

## FATIGUE AND WORK

Fatigue, it is said, comes from overwork. The cure for fatigue is therefore rest, that is, do-nothing. But the truth of the matter is that most often fatigue is due not to too much work, but rather too little work, in other words, laziness or boredom. In fact, fatigue need not come too soon or too easily, provided one knows how to go about his work. If you are interested in your work, you can continue for a very long time without fatigue; and precisely one of the means of recovering from fatigue is not to sit down and slip into lethargy and *tamas*, but to take up a work that rouses your interest. Work done in joy and quiet enthusiasm is tonic: it is dynamic rest. A work done without interest, as a sort of duty or task, will naturally tire you soon. The remedy therefore against fatigue is to keep the interest awake. Now, there is a further mystery. Interest does not depend upon the work: any work can be made interesting and interesting to a supreme degree. There is no work which is by itself dull, insipid, uninteresting. All depends upon the value you yourself put upon it; you can choose to make it as attractive as a romance, as significant as a symbol.

How to do it? How to find interest in any thing or all things? Is there not a work that conforms to your nature, adapted to your character and capacity? And are there not works that are antagonistic to your grain, that lie outside your scope and province?

The question is not about your scope and capacity. All depends upon your attitude, the consciousness with which you approach a work, especially when you are a sadhak. When a work comes to you or when you have to do a work, you must take it up as a thing worth doing. Whatever the value given to it normally or you usually put upon it, you should not neglect or merely tolerate it, but welcome it and set about it with the utmost conscientiousness possible. Even if it were a trifling insignificant thing, a menial affair, for example, do not consider it as mean or beneath your dignity. Directly you begin to do a thing in the right spirit, you will find it becoming miraculously interesting. Try to bring perfection even in that bit of insignificance. Do it with a good will, even if it is scrubbing the floor, telling yourself: "I must do it as best as I can, that is to say, this too I shall do even better than a servant, I shall make the floor look really neat and clean and beautiful."

That is the crux of the matter. You should try to bring out the best in you and put it into your work. In other words, the work becomes an instrument of progress. The goodwill, attention, concentration, self-forgetfulness and the control over yourself, over your organs and nerves—the "smaller" the work the more detailed is the control gained—all that involved in doing a work perfectly, with as much perfection as it is possible for you to command, are elements called forth in you and help you to make a better man. Indeed a work for which you have no preferential bias, to which you are not emotionally attached, even indifferent normally, may be of especial help, for you will be able to do it with less nervous disturbance, with a large amount of detachment and disinterestedness.

Man usually chooses his work or is made to choose a work because of a vital preference, a prejudice or notion that it is the kind in which he can shine or succeed. This egoistic vanity or opportunism may be necessary or unavoidable in ordinary life; but when one wishes to go beyond the ordinary life and aspires for the true life, this attachment or personal choice is more an impediment than a help to progress, towards finding the way to the true life. The Yogic attitude to work therefore is that of absolute detachment, not to have any choice, but to accept and do whatever is given to you, whatever comes to you in your normal course of life and do it with the utmost perfection possible. It is in that way and that way alone that all work becomes supremely interesting, and all life a miracle of delight.

This does not mean, however, that there is no work natural to you, for which you have a special aptitude, in and through which your soul, the Divine, can express itself fully and wholly in a special manner. But what is that work? The *kartavyam karma*—the work that demands to be done—deriving from your *swadharma*—your Self-nature? Evidently, it is not that of your superficial nature, which the mind chooses, the vital prefers and the body finds convenient. To come by your true or soul work, you have to pass through a considerable discipline, a rigorous training.

You cannot throw off this work and that at random declaring they are not the work fit for you or jump at anything that your fancy favours. Indeed you cannot give up anything, cast out anything, simply because it is unpleasant or not sufficiently pleasant. The more violently you try to shake off a thing, the more it will try to stick to you. Instead of that, you must know how to let a thing drop of itself, quietly, automatically and definitively. That is the only way of getting rid of an unwanted or an unnecessary thing. Before all, be sincere to yourself: that is to say, try to

follow the highest light and aspiration in you each moment, and be faithful to that and that alone. Never allow yourself to be shaken or moved by the likes and dislikes of your mind or heart or body. Do even what goes against the grain of your body or heart or mind, if it is presented to you as the thing to be done; do it as calmly, dispassionately and as perfectly as it is possible for you to do and leave the rest to your higher destiny. If you belong all to your soul, if you are obedient to the Divine alone, then as this consciousness and poise grow clearer and steadier in you, you will find things that are not consonant with it are dropping off from you quietly and without any effort or reaction from you, like autumn leaves from branches that supply the sap no more. Your work is changed, your circumstances are changed, your relations with things and persons are changed automatically and inevitably in accordance with the need and demand of your soul-consciousness.

---

DISCIPLINE: to act according to a standard of truth or a rule or law of action (dharma) or in obedience to a superior authority or to the highest principles discovered by the reason and intelligent Will and not according to one's own fancy, vital impulses and desires. In Yoga obedience to the Guru or to the Divine and law of Truth as declared by the Guru is the foundation of the Discipline.

SRI AUROBINDO

## SONNETS

### (1)

### LIBERATION

MY mind, my soul grow larger than all Space;
Time founders in that vastness glad and nude:
The body fades, an outline, a dim trace,
A memory in the spirit's solitude.

This universe is a vanishing circumstance
In the glory of a white infinity,
Beautiful and bare for the Immortal's dance,
House-room of my immense felicity.

In the thrilled happy giant void within
Thought lost in light and passion drowned in bliss,
Changing into a stillness hyaline,
Obey the edict of the Eternal's peace.

Life's now the Ineffable's dominion;
Nature is ended and the spirit alone.

October 1939

(2)

## OMNIPRESENCE

He is in me, round me, facing everywhere.
    Self-walled in ego to exclude His right,
I stand upon its boundaries and stare
    Into the frontiers of the Infinite.

Each finite thing I see is a façade;
    From its windows looks at me the Illimitable.
In vain was my prison of separate body made;
    His occult presence burns in every cell.

He has become my substance and my breath,
    He is my anguish and my ecstasy.
My birth is His eternity's sign, my death
    A passage of His immortality.

My dumb abysses are His screened abode;
In my heart's chamber lives the unworshipped God.

October 1939

(3)

## THE INDWELLING UNIVERSAL

I contain the whole world in my soul's embrace:
    In me Arcturus and Belphegor burn.
To whatsoever living form I turn
    I see my own body with another face.

All eyes that look on me are my sole eyes;
    The one heart that beats within all breasts is mine.
The world's happiness flows through me like wine,
    Its million sorrows are my agonies.

Yet all its acts are only waves that pass
    Upon my surface; inly for ever still,
Unborn I sit, timeless, intangible:
    All things are shadows in my tranquil glass,

My vast transcendence holds the cosmic whirl;
I am hid in it as in the sea a pearl.

July 1938

(4)

There is a glory of unrealised things
    To which Time's golden gains seem flimsy dross;
A world whose voice is a rustle of Silence' wings
    Calls us to heavenly joy from earthly loss.

All eye has seen, all that the ear has heard
    Is a pale illusion of that greater voice,
That mightier vision. Not the sweetest word
    Nor passionate hues that make the heart rejoice

Can tell of those diviner ecstasies.
    A Mind beyond our mind has sole that ken
Revealing unimagined harmonies,
    The fate and privilege of unborn men.

A rain-thrashed mire, the marvel of the rose,
Earth waits the destined splendour to disclose.

SRI AUROBINDO

# HYMN TO AGNI*

1. The master of many peoples who labour towards the godhead, we seek for you with words of perfect expression, Agni whom others also everywhere desire.

2. Men hold Agni in them as the increaser of strength. With offerings we dispose the sacrifice for thee, do thou then become today to us perfect minded and our keeper here in our havings, O thou who art of the truth of being.

3. Thee we choose out for our messenger, the priest of offering who hast universal knowledge; when thou art greatened in thy being thy flames range wide, thy lustres touch the heavens.

4. The gods even Varuna and Mitra and Aryaman light thee utterly, the ancient messenger; all wealth that mortal conquers by thee, O Agni, who to thee has given.

5. Thou art the rapturous priest of the sacrifice and master of this house and the envoy of creatures; in thee are met together all the steadfast laws of action which the gods have made.

6. It is in thee, O Agni, young and mighty, because thou art rich in joy that every offering is cast, therefore do thou today and hereafter, perfect of mind, offer to the gods perfected energies.

7. He it is, whom as the self-ruler men who have attained submission adore; by the greatness of the oblation men light entirely Agni when they have broken through their opposers.

8. They smite Vritra the coverer and pass beyond the two firmaments, and they make the wide kingdom their home. May the mighty One become in Kanwa a luminous energy fed with the offerings, the Steed of Life neighing in the pastures (stations) of the kine.

9. Take thy established seat, wide art thou, shine in thy purity revealing utterly the godhead; pour forth, O thou of the sacrifice, thy red active smoke of passion, thou wide-manifested, that full of vision.

* Rishi: Kanwa Ghaura (Rig Veda. I. 36)

10. Even thou whom the gods have set here for man most strong for the sacrifice, O bearer of the offering, Kanwa Medhyatithi has established as a seizer for him of his desired wealth, whom the mighty Indra and all who establish him by the song of praise;

11. Even that Agni whom Medhyatithi Kanwa has kindled high upon the Truth, may his impulses blaze forth, him may these fulfilling Words, him, even Agni, may we increase.

12. Complete our felicities, O thou who hast the self-fixity; for with thee, O Agni, is effectivity in the gods; thou rulest over the wealth of inspired knowledge. Show thou then favour to us, great art thou.

13. Utterly high uplifted stand for our growth, like the god Savitri; it is from these heights that thou becomest the saviour of our store when we call on thee.....[1]

14. High-raised protect us from the evil by the perceiving mind, burn utterly every eater of our being; raise us too on high for action, for life; distribute among the gods our activity.

15. Protect us, O Agni, from the Rakshasa, protect us from the harm of the undelighting, protect us from him who assails and him who would slay us, O Vast of lustre, O mighty and young.

16. As with thick falling blows scatter utterly (or scatter like clouds to every side) all the powers of undelight, O devourer of their force (or O destroyer of affliction), and him who would do us harm; whatsoever mortal being exceeds us by the keenness of his actions, may he not as our enemy have mastery over us.

17. Agni has won perfected energy for Kanwa and has won perfected enjoyment; Agni protects for him all friendly things, Agni keeps ever in safe being Medhyatithi who has confirmed him by the song of praise.

18. By Agni we call Turvasha and Yadu from the upper kingdoms; Agni has led to a new dwelling Brihadratha and Turviti (or Turviti of wide delight), a power against the foe.

19. Man establisheth thee within, O Agni, as a light for the eternal birth; mayest thou burn brightly in Kanwa manifested in the Truth and increased in being, thou to whom the doers of action bow down.

20. Impetuous, O Agni, and forceful are thy flames, terrible and not to be approached; always thou do burn utterly the powers who detain and the powers who are vessels of suffering, yea, every devourer.

[1] Blank in Mss.

SRI AUROBINDO

Q: It is said that you and the Mother were on this earth since the creation started. Kindly enlighten me what you both were doing for so many millions of years remaining in disguise. I say disguise because it is only in this birth that you have showed to the world your real nature.

A: Carrying on the evolution.

25-5-1935

* * *

Q: Would you please explain the point in detail?

A: That would mean writing the whole of human history. I can only say that as there are special descents to carry on the evolution to a farther stage, so also something of the Divine is always there to help through each stage itself in one direction or another.

26-5-1935

* * *

Q: Since an Avatar comes here with a divine Power, Light and Consciousness, why should he have to pass through the same process of sadhana as that of a common sadhak?

A: The Avatar is not supposed to act in a non-human way—he takes up human action and uses human methods with the human consciousness in front and the Divine behind. If he did not, his taking a human body would

have no meaning and would be of no use to anybody. He could just as well have stayed above and done things from there.

10-1-1936

* * *

Q: You and the Mother know what is going on in us: how and what we are aspiring for, how our nature is reacting to your help and guidance. What is then the necessity of writing to you all that?

A: It is necessary for you to be conscious and to put your self-observation before us; it is on that that we can act. A mere action on our observation without any corresponding consciousness in that part of the sadhaka would lead to nothing.

7-1-1936

* * *

The Mother has her own experience in bringing down the things that have to be brought down—but what the sadhakas experience she had long ago. The Divine does the sadhana first for the world and then in others.

* * *

Naturally, the Mother does the sadhana in each sadhaka—only it is conditioned by their zeal and their receptivity.

* * *

I have said that the Divine does the sadhana first for the world and then gives what is brought down to others. There can be no sadhana without realisations and experiences. The prayers are a record of Mother's experiences.

4-1-1935

* * *

The Mother is the Being and the Consciousness and the Power that contains the experience.

4-1-1935

* * *

Mother's contact is there all the day and the night also. If one keeps the right contact with her inwardly all day, the Pranam will bear its right fruit, for you will be in the right condition to receive. To make the whole day depend upon the Pranam, the whole inner attitude depend on the most outer aspect of the outer contact is to turn the whole thing topsy-turvy. It is the fundamental mistake made by the physical mind and vital which is the cause of the whole trouble.

16-3-1935

* * *

I mean the inner contact in which one either feels one with her or in contact with her or aware of her presence or at the very least turned towards her always.

* * *

Obviously, the time has nothing to do with the Pranam. One hour's touch or a moment's touch—as much can be given by the one as by the other.

18-4-1935

* * *

All that is quite correct. Even the human or the psychic love (of the Mother) many are unable to feel or understand because it is not quite in the ordinary human way.

* * *

The Mother's music has often been recognised by X as Indian of this or that *raga*. The Mother plays whatever comes through her—she does not usually play any precisely composed music whether European or Indian —the latter in fact she has never learned.

* * *

Q: "What is the difference between the ordinary, cosmic and the spiritual consciousness?"

A: 1. The spiritual consciousness is that in which we enter into the awareness of Self, the Spirit, the Divine and are able to see in all things their essential reality and the play of forces and phenomena as proceeding from that essential Reality.

2. The cosmic consciousness is that in which the limits of ego, personal mind and body disappear and one becomes aware of a cosmic vastness which is or filled by a cosmic spirit and aware also of the direct play of cosmic forces, universal mind forces, universal life-forces, universal energies of Matter, universal Overmind forces. But one does not become aware of all these together; the opening of the cosmic consciousness is usually progressive. It is not that the ego, the body, the personal mind disappear, but one feels them as only a small part of oneself. One begins to feel others too as part of oneself or varied repetitions of oneself, the same self modified by Nature in other bodies. Or, at the least, as living in the larger universal self which is henceforth one's own greater reality. All things in fact begin to change their nature and appearance; one's whole experience of the world is radically different from that of those who are shut up in their personal selves. One begins to know things by a different kind of experience, more direct, not depending on the external mind and the senses. It is not that the possibility of error disappears, for that cannot be so long as mind of any kind is one's instrument for transcribing knowledge, but there is a new, vast and deep way of experiencing, seeing, knowing, contacting things; and the confines of knowledge can be rolled back to an almost unmeasurable degree. The thing one has to be on guard against in the cosmic conscious-

ness is the play of a magnified ego, the vaster attacks of the hostile forces—for they too are part of the cosmic consciousness—and the attempt of the cosmic Illusion (Ignorance, Avidya) to prevent the growth of the soul into the cosmic Truth. These are things that one has to learn from experience; mental teaching or explanation is quite insufficient. To enter safely into the cosmic Consciousness and to pass safely through it, it is necessary to have a strong central unegoistic sincerity and to have the psychic being, with its divination of truth and unfaltering orientation towards the Divine, already in front in the nature.

3. The ordinary consciousness is that in which one knows things only or mainly by the intellect, the external mind and the senses and knows forces etc. only by their outward manifestations and results and the rest by inferences from these data. There may be some play of mental intuition, deeper psychic seeing or impulsions, spiritual intimations etc.—but in the ordinary consciousness these are incidental only and do not modify its fundamental character.

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By the *Divine Consciousness* we mean the spiritual consciousness to which the Divine alone exists, because all is the Divine and by which one passes byond the ignorance and thc lower nature into unity with the Divine and the Divine Nature.

Here in the ignorance we are not aware of the Divine and we obey the lower Nature.

SRI AUROBINDO

# THOUGHTS AND GLIMPSES*

## (*New Series-4*)

ALL existence is Brahman, Atman and Iswara, three names for one unnameable reality which alone exists. We shall give to this sole real existence the general name of God, because we find it ultimately to be not an abstract state of Existence, not conscious of itself, but a supreme and self-aware One who exists—absolutely in Himself, infinitely in the world with an appearance of the finite in His various manifestations in the world.

God in Himself apart from all world manifestation or realisable relation to world-manifestation is called the Paratpara Brahman, and is not knowable either to the knowledge that analyses or the knowledge that synthetically conceives. We can neither say of Him that He is personal or impersonal, existence or non-existence, pure or impure, Atman or un-Atman. We can only say to every attempt to define Him positively or negatively, *neti neti* not this, not this. We can pass into the Paratpara Brahman, but we cannot know the Paratpara Brahman.

God in the world is Brahman-Iswara-Atman, Prakriti or Shakti and Jiva. These are the three terms of His world-manifestation.

### INITIAL DEFINITIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS

Yoga has four powers and objects, purity, liberty, beatitude and perfection. Whosoever has consummated these four mightinesses in the being of the transcendental, universal, *lilāmaya* and individual God is the complete and absolute Yogin.

All manifestations of God are manifestations of the absolute Parabrahman.

The Absolute Parabrahman is unknowable to us, not because It is the nothingness of all that we are, for rather whatever we are in truth or in

* From the unpublished writings of Sri Aurobindo

seeming is nothing but Parabrahman, but because It is pre-existent and supra-existent to even the highest and purest methods and the most potent and illimitable instruments of which soul in the body is capable.

In Parabrahman knowledge ceases to be knowledge and becomes an inexpressible identity. Become Parabrahman, if thou wilt and if That will suffer thee, but strive not to know It; for thou shalt not succeed with these instruments and in this body.

In reality thou art Parabrahman already and ever wast and ever wilt be. To become Parabrahman in any other sense, thou must depart utterly out of world-manifestation and out even of world-transcendence.

Why shouldst thou hunger after departure from manifestation as if the world were an evil? Has not That manifested itself in thee and in the world and art thou wiser and purer and better than the Absolute, O mind-deceived soul in the mortal? When That withdraws thee, then thy going hence is inevitable; until Its force is laid in thee, thy going is impossible, cry thy mind never so fiercely and wailingly for departure. Therefore neither desire nor shun thy world, but seek the bliss and purity and freedom and greatness of God in whatsoever state or experience or environment.

So long as thou hast any desire, be it the desire of non-birth or the desire of liberation, thou canst not attain to Parabrahman. For That has no desires, neither of birth nor of non-birth, nor of world, nor of departure from world. The Absolute is unlimited by thy desire as It is inaccessible to thy knowledge.

If thou wouldst know Paratpara Brahman, then know It as It chooses to manifest Itself in world and transcending it—for transcendence also is a relation to world and not the sheer Absolute,—since otherwise It is unknowable. This is the simultaneous knowing and not knowing spoken of in the Vedanta.

Of Parabrahman we should not say that "It" is world-transcendent or world-immanent or related or non-related to the world; for all these ideas of world and not-world, of transcendence and immanence and relation are expressions of thought by which mind puts its own values on the self-manifestation of Parabrahman to its own principle of knowledge and we cannot assert any, even the highest of them to be the real reality of that which is at once all and beyond all, nothing and beyond nothing. A profound and unthinking silence is the only attitude which the soul manifested in world should adopt towards the Absolute.

We know of Parabrahman that It Is, in a way in which no object is and shall be in the world, because whenever and in whatever direction we go to

the farthest limits of soul-experience or thought-experience or body-experience or any essential experience whatsoever, we come to the brink of That and perceive It to be unknowably, without any capacity of experiencing about it any further truth whatsoever.

When thy soul retiring within from depth to depth and widening without from vastness to vastness stands in the silence of its being before an unknown and unknowable from which and towards which world is seen to exist as a thing neither materially real nor mentally real and yet not to be described as a dream or a falsehood, then know that thou art standing in the Holy of Holies, before the Veil that shall not be rent. In this mortal body thou canst not rend it, nor in any other body; nor in the state of self in body nor in the state of pure self, nor in waking nor in sleep nor in trance, nor in any state or circumstances whatsoever; for thou must be beyond state before thou canst enter into the Paratpara Brahman.

That is the unknown God to whom no altar can be raised and no worship offered; universe is His only altar, Existence is His only worship. That we are, feel, think, act or are but do not feel, do not think, do not act is for That enough. To That, the saint is equal with the sinner, activity with inactivity, man with the mollusc, since All are equally Its manifestations. These things at least are here of the Parabrahman and Para Purusha, which is the Highest that we know and the nearest to the Absolute. But what That is behind the veil or how behind the veil It regards Itself and its manifestation is a thing no mind can assume to tell or know; and he is equally ignorant and presumptuous who raises and inscribes to It an altar or who pretends to declare the Unknown to those who know that they can know It not. Confuse not thought, bewilder not the soul of man in its forward march, but turn to the universe and know That in this, *Tadeva etat*, for so only and in these terms It has set itself out to be known to those who are in the universe. Be not deceived by Ignorance, be not deceived by knowledge; there is none bound and none free and none seeking freedom but only God playing at these things in the extended might of His self-conscious being, *parā māya, mahimānam asya*, which we call the universe.

SRI AUROBINDO

# PHILOSOPHY OF THE UPANISHADS*

## I

### The Discovery of the Absolute Brahman

THE idea of transcendental Unity, Oneness, and Stability behind all the flux and variety of phenomenal life is the basal idea of the Upanishads: this is the pivot of all Indian metaphysics, the sum and goal of our spiritual experience. To the phenomenal world around us stability and singleness seem at first to be utterly alien; nothing but passes and changes, nothing but has its counterparts, contrasts, harmonised and dissident parts; and all are perpetually shifting and rearranging their relative positions and affections. Yet if one thing is certain, it is that the sum of all this change and motion is absolutely stable, fixed and unvarying, that all this heterogeneous multitude of animate and inanimate things are fundamentally homogeneous and one. Otherwise nothing could endure, nor could there be any certainty in existence. And this unity, stability, unvarying fixity which reason demands, and ordinary experience points to is being ascertained slowly but surely by the investigations of Science. We can no longer escape from the growing conviction that however the parts may change and shift and appear to perish, yet the sum and the whole remains unchanged, undiminished and imperishable; however multitudinous, mutable and mutually irreconcilable forms and compounds may be, yet the grand substratum is one, simple and enduring; death itself is not a reality but a seeming, for what appears to be destruction, is merely transformation and a preparation for rebirth. Science may not have appreciated the full import of her own discoveries; she may shrink from an unflinching acceptance of the logical results to which they lead; and certainly she is as yet far from advancing towards the great converse truths which they for the

* From old writings.

present conceal,—for instance the wonderful fact that not only is death a seeming, but life itself is a seeming, and beyond life and death there lies a condition which is truer and therefore more permanent than either. But though Science dreams not as yet of her goal her feet are on the road from which there is no turning back,—the road which Vedanta on a different plane has already trod before it.

Here then is a great fundamental fact which demands from philosophy an adequate explanation of itself,—that all variations resolve themselves into an unity; that within the flux of things and concealed by it is an indefinable, immutable Something, at once the substratum and sum of all, which Time cannot touch, motion perturb, nor variation increase or diminish, and that this substratum and sum has been from all eternity and will be for all eternity. A fundamental fact to which all thought moves, and yet is it not, when narrowly considered an acute paradox? For how can the sum of infinite variations be a sempiternally fixed amount which has never augmented or decreased and can never augment or decrease? How can that whole be fixed and eternal of which every smallest part is eternally varying and perishing? Given a bewildering whirl of motion, how does the result come to be not merely now or as a result, but from beginning to end a perfect fixity? Impossible, unless either there be a guiding Power, for which at first sight there seems to be no room in the sempiternal chain of causation; or unless that sum and substratum be the one reality, imperishable because not conditioned by Time, indivisible because not conditioned by Space, immutable because not conditioned by causality,—in a word absolute and transcendent and *therefore* eternal, unalterable and undecaying. Motion and change and death and division would then be merely transitory phenomena, marks and seemings of the One and Absolute, the as yet undefined and perhaps indefinable It which alone *is*.

To such a conclusion Indian speculation had turned at a very early period of its conscious strivings—uncertainly at first and with many gropings and blunders. The existence of some Oneness which gives order and stability to the multitudinous stir of the visible world, the Aryan thinkers were from the first disposed to envisage and they sought painfully to arrive at the knowledge of that Oneness in its nature or its essentiality. The living Forces of the Cosmos which they had long worshipped, yet always with a floating but persistent perception of an Unity in their multitude, melted on closer analysis into a single concept, a single Force or Presence, one

and universal. The question then arose, was that Force or Presence intelligent or non-intelligent? God or Nature? "He alone" hazarded the Rigveda "knoweth, or perhaps He knoweth not." Or might it not be that the Oneness which ties together and governs phenomena and rolls out the evolution of the worlds, is really the thing we call *Time*, since of the three original conditions of phenomenal existence, Time, Space and Causality, Time is a necessary part of the conception of causality and can hardly be abstracted from the conception of Space, but neither Space nor Causality seems necessary to the conception of Time? Or if it be not Time, might it not be *Swabhava*, the essential nature of Things taking various conditions and forms? Or perhaps *Chance*, some blind principle working out an unity and law in things by infinite experiment,—this too might be possible. Or since from eternal uncertainty eternal certainty cannot come, might it not be *Fate*, a fixed and unalterable law in things in subjection to which this world evolves itself in a preordained procession of phenomena from which it cannot deviate? Or perhaps in the original atomic fountain of things certain *Elements* might be discovered which by perpetual and infinite combinations and permutations keep the universe to its workings? But if so, these elements must themselves proceed from something which imposes on them the law of their being, and what could that be but the *Womb*, the matrix of original and indestructible matter, the plasm which moulds the universe and out of which it is moulded? And yet in whatever scheme of things the mind might ultimately rest, some room surely must be made for these conscious, thinking and knowing *Egos* of living beings, of whom knowledge and thought seem to be the essential selves and without whom this world of perceivable and knowable things could not be perceived and known;—and if not perceived and known, might it not be that without them it could not even exist?

Such were the gurges of endless speculation in which the old Aryan thinkers tossed and perplexed, sought for some firm standing ground, some definite clue which might save them from being beaten about like stumbling blind men led by a guide as blind. They sought at first to liberate themselves from the tyranny of appearances by the method which Kapila, the ancient prehistoric Master of Thought, had laid down for mankind, the method called Sankhya or the law of Enumeration. The method of Kapila consisted in guidance by pure discriminative reason and it took its name from one of its principal rules, the law of enumeration and generalisation. They enumerated first the immediate Truth-in-Things which they could

distinguish or deduce from things obviously phenomenal, and from these by generalisation they arrived at a much smaller number of ulterior Truths-in-Things of which the immediate were merely aspects. And then having enumerated these ulterior Truths-in-Things, they were able by generalisation to reduce them to a very small number of ultimate Truths-in-Things, the Tattwas (literally The-nesses) of the developed Sankhya philosophy. And these Tattwas once enumerated with some approach to certainty, was it not possible to generalise yet one step farther? The Sankhya did so generalise and by this supreme and final generalisation arrived at the very last step on which, in its own unaided strength, it could take safe footing. This was the great principle of Prakriti, the single eternal indestructible principle and origin of Matter which by perpetual evolution rolls out through aeons and aeons the unending panorama of things.[1] And for whose benefit? Surely for those conscious knowing and perceiving Egos, the army of witnesses, who, each in his private space of reasoning and perceiving Mind partitioned off by an enveloping medium of gross matter, sit for ever as spectators in the theatre of the Universe! For ever, thought the Sankhyas, since the Egos, though their partitions are being continually broken down and built anew and the spaces occupied never remain permanently identical, yet seem themselves to be no less eternal and indestructible than Prakriti.

This then was the wide fixed lake of ascertained philosophical knowledge into which the method of Sankhya, pure intellectual reasoning on definite principles, led in the mind of ancient India. Branchings off, artificial canals from the reservoir were not, indeed, wanting. Some by resolving that army of witnesses into a single Witness, arrived at the dual conception of God and Nature, Purusha and Prakriti, Spirit and Matter, Ego and Non-ego. Others, more radical, perceived Prakriti as the creation, shadow or aspect of Purusha, so that God alone remained, the spiritual or ideal factor eliminating by inclusion the material or real. Solutions were also attempted on the opposite side; for some eliminated the conscious Egos themselves as mere seemings; not a few seem to have thought that each ego is only a series of successive shocks of consciousness and the persistent sense of identity no more than an illusion due to the unbroken continuity of the shocks. If these shocks of consciousness are borne on the brain from the

[1] Note that Matter here not only includes gross matter with which Westen Science is mainly concerned, but subtle matter, the material in which thought and feeling work, and causal matter in which the fundamental operations of the Will-to-live are conducted.

changes of Prakriti in the multitudinous stir of evolution, then is consciousness one out of the many terms of Prakriti itself, so that Prakriti alone remains as the one reality, the material or real factor eliminating by inclusion the spiritual or ideal. But if we deny, as many did, that Prakriti is an ultimate reality apart from the perceptions of Purushas and yet apply the theory of a false notion of identity created by successive waves of sensation, we arrive at the impossible and sophistic position of the old Indian Nihilists whose reason by a singular suicide landed itself in Nothingness as the cradle and bourne, nay, the very stuff and reality of all existence. And there was a third direction in which thought tended and which led it to the very threshold of Vedanta; for this also was a possible speculation that Prakriti and Purusha might both be quite real and yet not ultimately different aspects or sides of each other and so, after all, of a Oneness higher than either. But these speculations plausible or imperfect, logical or sophistic, were yet mere speculations; they had no basis either in observed fact or in reliable experience. Two certainties seemed to have been arrived at, Prakriti was testified to by a close analysis of phenomenal existence; it was the basis of the phenomenal world which without a substratum of original matter could not be accounted for and without a fundamental oneness and indestructibility in that substratum could not be, what observation showed it to be, subject, namely, to fixed laws and evidently invariable in its sum and substance. On the other hand, Purushas were testified to by the eternal persistence of the sense of individuality and identity whether during life or after death[1] and by the necessity of a perceiving cause for the activity of Prakriti; they were the receptive and contemplative Egos within the sphere of whose consciousness Prakriti, stirred to creative activity by their presence, performed her long drama of phenomenal Evolution.

But meanwhile the seers of ancient India had, in their experiments and efforts at spiritual training and the conquest of the body, perfected a discovery which in its importance to the future of human knowledge dwarfs the divinations of Newton and Galileo; even the discovery of the inductive and experimental method in Science was not more momentous; for they discovered down to its ultimate processes the method of Yoga and by the method of Yoga they rose to three crowning realisations. They realised

[1] Survival of the human personality after death has always been held in India to be a proved fact beyond all dispute; the Charvak denial of it was contemned as mere irrational and wilful folly. Note however that survival after death does not necessarily to the Indian mind imply immortality; but only raises a presumption in its favour.

first as a fact the existence under the flux and multitudinousness of things of that supreme Unity and immutable stability which had hitherto been posited only as a necessary theory, an inevitable generalisation. They came to know that It is the one reality and all phenomena merely its seemings and appearances, that It is the true Self of all things and phenomena are merely its clothes and trappings. They learned that It is absolute and transcendent and, because absolute and transcendent, therefore eternal, immutable, imminuable and indivisible. And looking back on the past progress of speculation they perceived that this also was the goal to which pure intellectual reasoning would have led them. For that which is in Time must be born and perish; but the Unity and Stability of things is eternal and must therefore transcend Time. That which is in Space must increase and diminish, have parts and relations, but the Unity and Stability of things is imminuable, not augmentable, independent of the changefulness of its parts and untouched by the shifting of their relations, and must therefore transcend Space;—and if it transcends Space, cannot really have parts, since Space is the condition of material divisibility; divisibility therefore must be, like death, a seeming and not a reality. Finally that which is subject to causality, is necessarily subject to Change; but the Unity and Stability of things is immutable, the same now as it was aeons ago and will be aeons hereafter, and must therefore transcend Causality.

This then was the first realisation through Yoga, *Nityo'nityānām*, the One Eternal in many transient.

At the same time they realised one truth more,—a surprising truth; they found that the transcendent absolute Self of things was also the Self of living beings, the Self too of man, that highest of the beings living in the material plane on earth. The Purusha or conscious Ego in man which had perplexed and baffled the Sankhyas, turned out to be precisely the same in his ultimate being as Prakriti the apparently non-conscious source of things; the non-consciousness of Prakriti, like so much else, was proved a seeming, and no reality, since behind the inanimate form a conscious Intelligence at work is to the eyes of the Yogin luminously self-evident.

This then was the second realisation through Yoga, *Chetanaschetanānām*, the One Consciousness in many Consciousnesses.

Finally at the base of these two realisations was a third, the most important of all to our race,—that the Transcendent Self in individual man is as complete *because identically the same* as the Transcendent Self in the Universe; for the Transcendent is indivisible and the sense of separate individuality is

only one of the fundamental seemings on which the manifestation of phenomenal existence perpetually depends. In this way the Absolute which would otherwise be beyond knowledge, becomes knowable; and the man who knows his whole Self knows the whole Universe. This stupendous truth is enshrined to us in the two famous formulae of Vedanta, *So'ham*, He am I, and *Aham Brahma asmi*, I am Brahman the Eternal.

Based on these four grand truths, *Nityo'nityānām, Chetanaschetanānām, So'ham, Aham Brahma asmi*, as upon four mighty pillars the lofty philosophy of the Upanishads raised its front among the distant stars.

SRI AUROBINDO

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If the *equality* is entire there can be no disturbance. Disturbance shows that the equality is not entire.

SRI AUROBINDO

# THE ANANDA BRAHMAN*

THE way of devotion in the integral synthetic Yoga will take the form of a seeking after the Divine through love and delight and a seizing with joy on all the ways of his being. It will find its acme in a perfect union of love and a perfect enjoyment of all the ways of the soul's intimacy with God. It may start from knowledge or it may start from works, but it will then turn knowledge into a joy of luminous union with the being of the Beloved and turn works into a joy of the active union of our being with the will and the power of being of the Beloved. Or it may start directly from love and delight; it will then take both these other things into itself and will develop them as part of the complete joy of oneness.

The beginning of the heart's attraction to the Divine may be impersonal, the touch of an impersonal joy in something universal or transcendent that has revealed itself directly or indirectly to our emotional or our aesthetic being or to our capacity of spiritual felicity. That which we thus grow aware of is the Ananda Brahman, the bliss existence. There is an adoration of an impersonal Delight and Beauty, of a pure and an infinite perfection to which we can give no name or form, a moved attraction of the soul to some ideal and infinite Presence, Power, existence in the world or beyond it, which in some way becomes psychologically or spiritually sensible to us and then more and more intimate and real. That is the call, the touch of the bliss existence upon us. Then to have always the joy and nearness of its presence, to know what it is, so as to satisfy the intellect and the intuitional mind of its constant reality, to put our passive and, so far as we can manage it, our active, our inner immortal and even our outer mortal being into perfect harmony with it, grow into a necessity of our living. And to open ourselves to it is what we feel to be the one true happiness, to live into it the sole real perfection.

A transcendent Bliss, unimaginable and inexpressible by the mind and

* *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Part II (The Yoga of Devotion), Chapter VII.

speech, is the nature of the Ineffable. That broods immanent and secret in the whole universe and in everything in the universe. Its presence is described as a secret ether of the bliss of being, of which the Scripture says that, if this were not, none could for a moment breathe or live. And this spiritual bliss is here also in our hearts. It is hidden in from the toil of the surface mind which catches only at weak and flawed translations of it into various mental, vital and physical forms of the joy of existence. But if the mind has once grown sufficiently subtle and pure in its receptions and not limited by the grosser nature of our outward responses to existence, we can take a reflection of it which will wear perhaps wholly or predominantly the hue of whatever is strongest in our nature. It may present itself first as a yearning for some universal Beauty which we feel in Nature and man and in all that is around us; or we may have the intuition of some transcendent Beauty of which all apparent beauty here is only a symbol. That is how it may come to those in whom the aesthetic being is developed and insistent and the instincts which, when they find form of expression, make the poet and artist, are predominant. Or it may be the sense of a divine spirit of love or else a helpful and compassionate infinite Presence in the universe or behind or beyond it which responds to us when we turn the need of our spirit towards it. So it may first show itself when the emotional being is intensely developed. It may come near to us in other ways, but always as a Power or Presence of delight, beauty, love or peace which touches the mind, but is beyond the forms these things take ordinarily in the mind.

For all joy, beauty, love, peace, delight are outflowings from the Ananda Brahman,—all delight of the spirit, the intellect, the imagination, aesthetic sense, ethical aspiration and satisfaction, action, life, the body. And through all ways of our being the Divine can touch us and make use of them to awaken and liberate the spirit. But to reach the Ananda Brahman in itself the mental reception of it must be subtilised, spiritualised, universalised, discharged of every thing that is turbid and limiting. For when we draw quite near or enter into it, it is by an awakened spiritual sense of a transcendent and universal Delight which exists within and yet behind and beyond the contradictions of the world and to which we can unite ourselves through a growing universal and spiritual or a transcendental ecstasy.

Ordinarily, the mind is satisfied with reflecting this Infinity we perceive or with feeling the sense of it within and without us, as an experience which, however frequent, yet remains exceptional. It seems in itself so satisfying and wonderful when it comes and our ordinary mind and the active life

which we have to lead may seem to us so incompatible with it, that we may think it excessive to expect any thing more. But the very spirit of Yoga is this, to make the exceptional normal, and to turn that which is above us and greater than our normal selves into our own constant consciousness. Therefore we should not hesitate to open ourselves more steadily to whatever experience of the Infinite we have, to purify and intensify it, to make it our object of constant thought and contemplation, till it becomes the originating power that acts in us, the Godhead we adore and embrace, our whole being is put into tune with it and it is made the very self of our being.

Our experience of it has to be purified of any mental alloy in it, otherwise it departs, we cannot hold it. And part of this purification is that it shall cease to be dependent on any cause or exciting condition of mind; it must become its own cause and self-existent, source of all other delight, which will exist only by it, and not attached to any cosmic or other image or symbol through which we first came into contact with it. Our experience of it has to be constantly intensified and made more concentrated; otherwise it shall only reflect it in the mirror of the imperfect mind and not reach that point of uplifting and transfiguration by which we are carried beyond the mind into the ineffable bliss. Object of our constant thought and contemplation, it will turn all that is into itself, reveal itself as the universal Ananda Brahman and make all existence its outpouring. If we wait upon it for the inspiration of all our inner and our outer acts, it will become the joy of the Divine pouring itself through us in light and love and power on life and all that lives. Sought by the adoration and love of the soul, it reveals itself as the Godhead, we see in it the face of God and know the bliss of our Lover. Tuning our whole being to it, we grow into a happy perfection of likeness to it, a human rendering of the divine nature. And when it becomes in every way the self of our self, we are fulfilled in being and we bear the plenitude.

Brahman always reveals himself to us in three ways, within ourselves, above our plane, around us in the universe. Within us, there are two centres of the Purusha, the inner Soul through which he touches us to our awakening; there is the Purusha in the lotus of the heart which opens upward all our powers and the Purusha in the thousand-petalled lotus whence descend through the thought and will, opening the third eye in us, the lightnings of vision and the fire of the divine energy. The bliss existence may come to us through either one of these centres. When the lotus of the heart breaks open, we feel a divine joy, love and peace expanding in us

like a flower of light which irradiates the whole being. They can then unite themselves with their secret source, the Divine in our hearts, and adore him as in a temple; they can flow upwards to take possession of the thought and the will and break out upward towards the Transcendent; they stream out in thought and feeling and act towards all that is around us. But so long as our normal being offers any obstacle or is not wholly moulded into a response to this divine influence or an instrument of this divine possession, the experience will be intermittent and we may fall back constantly into our old mortal heart; but by repetition, *abhyāsa*, or by the force of our desire and adoration of the Divine, it will be progressively remoulded until this abnormal experience becomes our natural consciousness.

When the other upper lotus opens, the whole mind becomes full of a divine light, joy and power, behind which is the Divine, the Lord of our being on his throne with our soul beside him or drawn inward into his rays; all the thought and will become then a luminosity, power and ecstasy; in communication with the Transcendent, this can pour down towards our mortal members and flow by them outwards on the world. In this dawn too there are, as the Vedic mystics knew, our alternations of its day and night, our exiles from the light; but as we grow in the power to hold this new existence, we become able to look long on the sun from which this irradiation proceeds and in our inner being we can grow one body with it. Sometimes the rapidity of this change depends on the strength of our longing for the Divine thus revealed, and on the intensity of our force of seeking; but at others it proceeds rather by a passive surrender to the rhythms of his all-wise working which acts always by its own at first inscrutable method. But the latter becomes the foundation when our love and trust are complete and our whole being lies in the clasp of a Power that is perfect love and wisdom.

The Divine reveals himself in the world around us when we look upon that with a spiritual desire or delight that seeks him in all things. There is often a sudden opening by which the veil of forms is itself turned into a revelation. A universal spiritual Presence, a universal peace, a universal infinite Delight has manifested, immanent, embracing, all-penetrating. This presence by our love of it, our delight in it, our constant thought of it returns and grows upon us; it becomes the thing that we see and all else is only its habitation, form and symbol. Even all that is most outward, the body, the form, the sound, whatever our senses seize, are seen as this

Presence; they cease to be physical and are changed into a substance of spirit. This transformation means a transformation of our own inner consciousness; we are taken by the surrounding Presence into itself and we become part of it. Our own mind, life, body become to us only its habitation and temple, a form of its working and an instrument of its self-expression. All is only soul and body of this delight.

This is the Divine seen around us and on our own physical plane. But he may reveal himself above. We see or feel him as a high-uplifted Presence, a great infinite of Ananda above us,—or in it, our Father in heaven, —and do not feel or see him in ourselves or around us. So long as we keep this vision, the mortality in us is quelled by that Immortality; it feels the light, power and joy and responds to it according to its capacity; or it feels the descent of the spirit and it is then for a time transformed or else uplifted into some lustre of reflection of the light and power; it becomes a vessel of the Ananda. But at other times it lapses into the old mortality and exists or works dully or pettily in the ruck of its earthly habits. The complete redemption comes by the descent of the divine Power into the human mind and body and the remoulding of their inner life into the divine image, —what the Vedic seers called the birth of the Son by the sacrifice. It is in fact by a continual sacrifice or offering, a sacrifice of adoration and aspiration, of works, of thought and knowledge, of the mounting flame of the Godward will that we build ourselves into the being of this Infinite.

When we possess firmly this consciousness of the Ananda Brahman in all of these three manifestations, above, within, around, we have the full oneness of it and embrace all existences in its delight, peace, joy and love; then all the worlds become the body of this self. But we have not the richest knowledge of this Ananda if it is only an impersonal presence, largeness or immanence that we feel, if our adoration has not been intimate enough for this Being to reveal to us out of its wide-extended joy the face and body and make us feel the hands of the Friend and Lover. Its impersonality is the blissful greatness of the Brahman, but from that can look out upon us the sweetness and intimate control of the divine Personality. For Ananda is the presence of the Self and Master of our being and the stream of its outflowing can be the pure joy of his Lila.

SRI AUROBINDO

# BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

## II

OF world creation we can say that there have been three decisive steps. Firstly there was the involution of the Divine Nature into the density and divisibility of substance. Matter was created as the fixed and static foundation. Secondly there began a progressive emergence of the imprisoned Force out of the individual seed-centres which, even latent in matter, contain the concentrated essence and dynamis of the Divine Nature itself; and thus did the progressive development of Life emerge. Thirdly there came into being the thinking individual, possessing a conscious, though at first vague and indeterminate, awareness of an Existence or world of Perfection, Light and Harmony beyond this world of struggling life and groping thought. Gradually the individual, through the unfolding of the latent Knowledge in him, has come to realise that the very seed of Perfection, the boundless Nature and creative dynamis of the Divine, has all the time been secreted within, and is but waiting for his conscious opening in order to emerge and enter into this worldly life, and so take the lead in bringing about the perfection of which man's half-formed ideas have but as yet caught a fleeting glimpse. In the process of creation moreover, we see that the disruption or seeming disintegration of the infinite Vastness of the pure Divine Nature in its descent into Cosmos, was an inevitable step in order to establish finite centres of itself, so that a concentrated or one-pointed action in infinite series and combinations could indeed effectuate the evolutionary plan inherent in the original creative Idea. In this way the individual came into being as a finite and limited centre of action; but at the same time he could, even through that constricted orbit of action, increasingly develop his potentiality towards an infinite range of freedom and expansiveness. For the Infinite is not only the source and matrix of the individual but is also the central kernel and essence of his being. Let us therefore examine a little more closely this ever-present link between the infinite Vast that is

beyond Creation as we know it, and the multitude of individual beings who constitute the growing-points or action-centres in the world. In this inquiry however, we must be constantly guided by the principle already observed, that the individual is not only the instrumentality of cosmic progression, but is more pointedly the instrument of the Truth-consciousness which itself is the instrumental Power of the Supreme.

At the very outset we can now state that the intermediary Power which stands between the absolute Transcendent or supracosmic Reality of the Divine, and the multiplicity which constitutes the manifest world, is a Divine Will of action and Knowledge. It is above mind, and the true Creator of the world. But though this Power is beyond and aloof, it has been realised through spiritual insight or revealing flashes of intuition that avenues of awareness exist, by which one can reach or through which one can open oneself to this greater Consciousness. By such self-expansion, or perhaps sudden luminous self-transcendence one can attain to heights beyond mind, and there one may partake, in those rare moments of enlightenment, in the glories of superhuman experiences. At least such have been the experiences of the greatest mystics and the spiritual leaders of the world. Some of their recorded revelations contain, among those supra-intellectual realisations, even gleanings of the supramental Heights. But because of the mind's inherent incapacity to transmit the integral content of those experiences, such revelations are largely mixed; so that those which particularly belong to the Truth-consciousness proper, have not been clearly and decisively separated from other spiritual realisations. Thus the principle of Supermind was lost to spiritual knowledge, being largely obscured by or mixed wih other factors extraneous to it. Of the ancient scriptures the only known or at least the clearest recognition of the Truth-consciousness as the predominant and central Power of Cosmos, occurs in the old Vedic hymns, where it appears clothed in a powerful symbol and imagery. It is through these (or their modern transliteration as they have been reinterpreted by Sri Aurobindo[1]), that our vision is raised to glimpse something of the Reality, of which the symbols are but indications and hints. It is certain that had it not been for Sri Aurobindo's luminous revelations not only would the inner spirit and meaning of those ancient symbols have been lost to us in the mists of time, but the true rôle of the supramental Force as the salvation of man and the world would be as yet unrealised.

[1] See "Hymns to the Mystic Fire"

For hitherto there had been, on the one hand, a mixed or clouded vision of the higher Reality, so that the resultant interpretation was confused with images of lower occult worlds,—vital and mental. Such has been the stuff out of which myth, folklore and fantasy have been woven. Or on the other hand there may have been an inadequate power of transcribing in an illuminating and comprehensible language such of the higher truths as could be realisable to our higher mental receptiveness, particularly the intuitive and illumined levels of mind. But from these efforts of the past, which illustrate the real limitations and deviations of mind, we can understand more clearly the errors to avoid and see some of the possible means whereby man can now open himself to that wider Consciousness, and so bridge the gap between the luminous Truth beyond and its full operation here in our worldly life. It would further help to clarify the issue and bring us nearer to this constructive effort if we were to consider in greater detail the principal differences between our present mental knowing and the nature and working of the Truth-consciousness. And in this endeavour we can be safely guided by the significant truth that mind itself conceals some essence and potentiality of Supermind, by which it can ultimately be transformed into a receptive vehicle that is fully conducive to the higher Light.

Since this higher Consciousness is the true dynamic Origin and Creator of the world—or rather should we say Creatrix since it is not only the womb out of which the worlds are born but also the constant bearer of the world's evolutionary travail—it is no static state of immobile repose such as is the nature of the Transcendent Reality, but a dynamic power of knowledge that possess the effective Will to create and harmonise world within world. Unlike mind where the will is separate from the knowledge possessed (so that its acts are mostly misdirected and not in accordance with its instigating knowledge), in Supermind Knowledge is inherent in the Will so that all its actions spring directly and spontaneously from the pure integral Truth. Thus Supermind, the dynamic Soul of Cosmos, is neither of the erring stuff of human mentality nor of the static Nature of the transcendent Heights of Spirit. Even from the earliest revelations of Supermind, or Truth-consciousness as it was termed, we can see that it revealed itself first as a luminous vastness—imaged as the realm of the Sun—beyond our ordinary consciousness. To the Vedic Seers all the separate gods were indeed but cosmic powers, serving and operated from that world of Truth and Light. Truth-consciousness was thus the more precise term used to denote this higher plane of existence; while above and in direct contact

with it is the Consciousness of the pure Divine Nature (or Sachchidananda). Figuratively speaking, Truth-consciousness is thus the child of the Divine Nature, while at the same time it is the parent of mind. It has both the Power of the Divine Knowledge, and is also able to create and manifest itself in and through a multiplicity of action-centres. But always it is intimately connected with that infinite Freedom which lies beyond both the creative unity and the multiplicity,—that is, with the Absolute and Supreme Reality itself.

To the mind the ultimate unity and absolute infinity of the entire Reality are merely abstract terms which cannot be adequately grasped by it in any conceivable wholeness. We cannot conceive that these abstract concepts indicate the vaster nature of Reality. And in order to seize the whole Vastness of the Absolute in its utter entirety we tend to transcend or overleap completely the narrow constricting instrumentality of mind, in order to reach that ineffable Unity where there is no multiplicity and no division. But by this supra-cosmic leap we lose our native contact with the creative cosmic Reality, and our consequent means of progression towards a divine manifestation. Our approach therefore must necessarily and is naturally through the higher reaches of mind, which has thus become the springboard to that which is immediately above mind's domain. For we have perceived that mind is but a preparatory step, a transitory stage to that greater Consciousness; its main function is to grasp the intricate and interrelated detail of things, seeing the separate aspects and parts of a Whole which it cannot yet seize in its entirety. Analysis and synthesis are thus its chief methods of understanding. But even then mind does not really know,—in the comprehensive and integral sense of the word. In order to comprehend the integral Reality in its absolute fullness, and not merely as a synthesis of separate parts, we must open the doors of mind to a deeper Knowledge and widen our awareness to embrace a larger Consciousness beyond the confines of mind. For the summits of mental knowledge, we find, are but vantage points, not indeed to reach Nirvana or mere oblivion of personality, but to establish contact with the dynamic Truth-consciousness as yet beyond. It is necessary for us therefore to train the obscure regions of mind—the blind instincts with their vague and mixed perceptions—until all parts of the being respond readily to the Light and the Truth of the creative Spirit, instead of shrinking from it as they do at present. Herein lies the conscious and constant effort required by us.

When we consider the creative process of the universe in the light of

the higher spiritual experiences we realise that Cosmos had emerged not out of a static Void but was at first an original self-concentration of that supreme Unity in which it was contained as in a matrix. Its emergence gave rise to an infinite extension and diffusion of all that was concentrated in the original Unity. This would appear to have produced a total disintegration of the creative Principle into a numerous though loosely related mixture of parts, which thus created both the discord and concord that is characteristic of the cosmos. But a third factor had intervened in the shape of a central co-ordinating Power, which indeed upholds that extensive creation and prevents all the diverse and opposite pulls it contains from lapsing into a real disintegration. This Power is the Truth-consciousness or Supermind which alone is empowered with the whole Force of the Divine for maintaining a unity amidst the utmost diversity, a stability within the utmost mutability, and a harmony within a turmoil of opposite pulls and conflicts. Thus is the dynamic Truth-consciousness, which in itself possesses the Real creative Idea of the Supreme, the central effective and co-ordinating factor of Creation, endowed with the very omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence of the Divine.

The working of Supermind is principally through the divine Idea it contains, which is thus the archetype of the created reality. It was this archetype that the philosophers had dimly discerned, but which they took to be merely a function of the higher mind or perhaps a reality of the Universal Mind. It is to distinguish the true nature of this divine creative Idea from the ideative function of mind—that Sri Aurobindo has utilised the term Real-Idea to designate the former principle. Thus mental ideas are not immediate realities, whereas the Ideas inherent in Supermind are already Real. Or in other words, in the function of mind there is a gap between the mental idea and its actualisation, while in Supermind the Idea is always and eternally a reality. Thus is the Real-Idea the true parent of the manifest universe. Out of the indivisible unity of the Supreme the Truth-consciousness has brought forth the triune principle of the Divine Nature, and manifests it firstly in the direct opposite of that original Nature, and thence it emerges through a step-by-step progression until it attains ultimately the manifestation of the Divine Nature itself in the living substance of the world. Thus while pure Spirit or Being is the summit and all-pervading truth of the higher trinity, inert Matter has become the basis and bodily form of the lower order. Likewise Conscious-Force has become the subconscient urge of Life; and the Freedom and Delight of being has

become the constricted ego-centre and desire-motive of Mind. But at the same time each principle contains all the others, though their frontal, manifest or dynamic aspects may thus differ, in that they reflect only the nature of their presiding principle. Thus Matter contains within it the seed-elements of Life and Mind which at the same time contain the Spirit, Consciousness and Freedom of a higher order. The whole of Creation may in fact be said to be a movement between Spirit in which all is involved (in the supreme Unity), and out of which all emerges or descends to the other pole of Matter, where also all is involved (in the uttermost Inconscient) and out of which all evolves or ascends to the other pole of Spirit. Throughout all Creation there is thus the same thread of inner harmony and integration, wherein all principles, forces and forms contain all the rest of existence within them,—latent, potential and seed-like. It is only through the working of the divine Power of Knowledge that the infinite possibilities of each, in their multiple forms and diversities, are expressed and harmonised within one integral movement. The seed is indeed the Truth in embryo, and it is the creative action of Truth that works within and emerges ultimately out of the seed. Thus it can be stated more decisively that a Knowledge-Force is indeed the guiding Principle behind all the natural phenomena and processes of the universe. And every seed-centre not only contains the potentiality of the Whole, but it acts and grows in stature in accordance with the supreme Will and Knowledge that is ever guiding the movement of the totality. Thus the principal work of Nature is to evolve in manifest forms the integral Truth which is secreted within the seed-centres that constitute its multiple growing-points. And here we perceive a new and more comprehensive aspect of the wonders of Nature opening up before us.

The whole difference between our mental consciousness and the Truth-consciousness is thus centred around the realisation of the true or Real-Idea, which has both the Vision and the creative Power of the Divine. (And we must note that mind is here compared with Supermind not merely to prove the undoubted superiority of the latter, but in order to comprehend that higher Consciousness the better and as far as possible in terms and processes with which we are already familiar). Unlike the constructions of mind there is no separation in the higher function between thought and the reality, or between the idea and the fact. For all thought directly issues from Truth, just as the water of a fountain and the pool from which it springs are one and the same. Likewise the creative seed-Idea, inherent in

Truth, has germinated the worlds of reality. It is this creative, regenerating Power that is the very origin of the individual, and forms the natural mainspring and directive centre of the soul's aspiration. Yet there is another fundamental difference between mental consciousness and that of Supermind, which is concerned with our approach to and acquisition of Knowledge itself. Thus in our mental functioning the will-power is quite separate from the idea one seeks to activate, so that the required action may or may not occur. (We must remember of course that in mind the will is a function of the all-possessive ego-centre, and is used by it solely for its own calculated ends). It is in this hiatus however, between the will and the idea that mind leaves itself open to all the error, faultiness and ineptitude which invariably enter into its processes. In the Divine-centred Supermind, on the other hand, there is no such paralysing division, since the idea is the spontaneous expression of the inherent Truth, and the Will is the Truth-infused motive-force which brings forth and shapes that idea. Here we have no alien clash of ideas or conflicting forces of will as in the operation of mind. Supermind acts as one vast Consciousness and as one vast Will, containing and co-relating all its creative ideas and energies. Its working is that of a supreme Harmony, which is inconceivable and wholly foreign to our scattered and unco-ordinated thought and mental process.

If we glance back to the traditional religious conception of God, that which has taken Him to be the omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent Being and Creator, we find a correspondence here between what might be called an anthropomorphised conception and that which has been visualised by a more precise spiritual knowledge to be the active or creative aspect of the Divine, as distinct from the static or supra-cosmic Divine. (This of course is not surprising since it is the same Godhead regarded from different standpoints—one the personal and the other the cosmic.) But obviously that detached creative poise alone, which formed the traditional conception, does not explain all that God is. It is in fact through the conception of Supermind, as the direct Power of the Divine and the true creative centre of the cosmic movement, that we see our true relation within the divine Plan, which clearly aims to manifest completely the Divine Nature through the terrestrial evolution. Thus the error of the old religious thought in regarding the creative Power of God as the solitary Supreme has only caused an unbridgeable gulf to stand between God and man. It is this trenchant duality which had also helped to produce such a radical division in human thought, so that the true Spiritual Reality and its direct relation with our worldly life

had become wholly obscured. How then could Divine Knowledge which is so necessary for man's further advancement be considered to be the very root of world knowledge? Or how could man see that world knowledge is but a branch of the all-embracing Divine Knowledge? If however we are to arrive at a true unifying knowledge which sees the Divine Nature and Power to be the source of all things, we must realise that the very presence of the Truth-consciousness is the one essential and omnipotent link between God the Supreme and man. It is only then that one can become fully aware of one's relation with the Divine, and hence discover one's own true function and destiny in the world. Only by this realisation will man be stirred to establish on earth that which is at present but an occult Reality.

NATHANIEL PEARSON

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CONCENTRATION: to concentrate the consciousness in itself simply, as you tighten a belt. It has got relaxed and diffused, so you have lost what you gained. Or if you have not the habit of doing that, concentrate in the memory of the Mother till the undiffussed state comes back.

SRI AUROBINDO

## *Sādhana Sāmrājyam**

### Sovereign Sway of Sadhana

*(Continued from last issue)*

18. Fresh is the eye, fresh the ear, fresh also is the mind with outlook (lit. thought) new. Fresh is the object seen, fresh what is audible, and fresh also whatever strikes the understanding. Everything celebrates the Plenum, the Vast, that is equal. How many, how many the wonders the radiances of the Lord's glance hold aloft?[1]

That is the Dawn of the Divine consciousness for the Yogin which brings in its wake certain indubitable results seen in the life of the blessed individual. Such a one finds he has a new sight. He no more sees in the way he was accustomed to see. Things no more impinge upon his eye as before. He is no longer deceived or misled by appearances. His eye penetrates them and seizes on the truth behind each appearance. His hearing undergoes a similar change. It is no more given to catch the discords and disharmonies in the world; it rather listens to the note of accord and harmony amidst the bewildering multitude of things in the world. Likewise the mind gets new-formed, its outlook is re-fashioned and it fronts its objects with a totally new basis of approach. It does not look at things piece by piece, it is impelled to take a more comprehensive and total view in its contact with them. It recognises the constitutional limitations inherent in its own make-up and opens to the

* Sanskrit verses of Sri T. V. Kapali Sastry, translated into English with annotation by M. P. Pandit.

[1] नवं चक्षुः श्रोत्रं नवमपि मनो नूतनमतं
नवं दृश्यं श्रव्यं नवमपि च धीगोचरगतम् ।
समानं भूमानं सकलमपि वस्तु प्रथयति
प्रभोर्वीक्षाभासः कति कति न चित्राणि दधते ॥१८॥

lead and workings of higher faculties above the mind and learns to function with this higher light and power for guidance. The effect of this change is not confined to the subjective being and its incline to a static poise; from within it is external also. It extends to the senses, to the object that is seen, the thing that is heard and that which confronts the understanding—all these acquire a new significance. The entire objective world presents itself in a new apparel, with a fresh meaning. For hitherto it was what the senses reported it to be. It was on the basis of impressions formed by the senses that the world was judged and acted upon. But 'the senses are liars.' They mistake and misrepresent what they contact. But now with the change in the mode of functioning of the senses the outer world also undergoes a corresponding change. Everything in the universe points to the Vast—the Bhuma. *Bhuma*, the Plenum in the Upanishad means the Brahman itself, the Supreme Reality. And every little object, every finite brings into bold relief the Infinite against the background of which it springs into existence to his eye. The tiny sing the odyssey of the Great One. Each of the Many reveals and celebrates the underlying Unity of the One that is equal in all. There is, indeed, no end to these and other wonders held and released by the dynamic brilliances of the Lord's glance.

19. As the revealing splendour of the Lord's Yoga,—an art of Marvel, adored and empty of mind, paces forth, the music in the superb Silence enters the cavity of the ear filling with sound heaven and earth and the spaces of the limpid sky; and something arranges the play of the Light.[1]

The mind is relegated to its proper role. It has given up its arrogant claim to excercise the functions that more properly belong to a higher faculty, the higher *buddhi* and is well settled into its natural poise. In such a being, freed from the whirlpool of mental currents, the splendour of the Lord's Yoga paces forth more and more freely, disseminating its splendour, lighting up every nook and corner, revealing all the inside with its strengths and imperfections to the observant eye for the necessary attention and action; the ways of its movement, the modes of its operation are

[1] दिवं नादेनोर्वीमपि गगनमापूर्य विमलं
महामौने गानं विशति निभृतं कर्णकुहरम् ।
अपि ज्योतिर्लीलां कलयति किमप्यद्भुतनये
मनश्शून्ये मान्ये प्रचलति विभोर्योगविभवे ॥१९॥

beyond the common conception of the human mind; it carries itself with the ease and grace of a perfected art and effects and fulfils with the power and dynamis of the Great Wonder. Out of the profound depths of the Silence there emerges a music, *nāda*, the mystical sound, not the music of the earth but the enchanting music of the spheres overtopping the physical universe. The vibrations of this heavenly music gently steal into the atmosphere of the seeker, they fill his serene ears with their sweet cadences and envelop in their harmony all around, the earth, the heaven, the transparent spaces of the sky whose air he breathes. Here is the noiseless sound, the voice of the Silence, a sure indication of the working of the Supreme power which is opening up all the inner centres of the being to the subtler planes around and above.

And as the Yoga-Force progresses in its sway the Light at its head begins to manifest, to operate more and more visibly. Then is the play of Light which is so often seen even by the outer eye but in its subtler vision.

20. Or, the blessed being, a bodied consciousness, is able, only with effort, to recognise the bounded space or time's course or to determine severally objects of distinct import; he (the blessed being) in whom sports the Lord's gracious glance laden with Yoga.[1]

He is truly blessed in whom sports this gracious glance of the Master, the all-effecting look laden with the force of Yoga. As the Sadhana progresses in the manner sketched above, he grows out of the limits of the limited body-consciousness, his feeling of identity with the physical body ceases to be and he comes to grow more and more in identity with the nature of the Consciousness that is unveiling itself in him and becomes as it were 'a bodied consciousness' i.e. the consciousness itself massed in form. He is one with the Consciousness that is infinite in nature, he is just one centre of it. That being the fact of his existence, the distinctions of Time and Space lose their rigidities to him. All is one Extension of the Infinite Consciousness, even as time is Eternity in duration. The fact of the endless variety of forms loses its urgency for him as he only sees the

[1] परिच्छिन्नं देशं प्रमितुमथवा कालकलनां
विविक्तार्थान् भावान् पृथगिह विनिर्णेतुमथवा।
प्रयासेनैवासौ प्रभवति कृती चिन्मयवपुः
कृपावीक्षा यस्मिन् विलसति विभोर्योगभरिता ॥२०॥

One amidst All. And yet, when, as a measure of practical convenience, in his dealings with the world, he recognises the bounds of space and the duration of Time and deals with the distinct objects as if they were really exclusive and independent of each other, he does so with a certain strain, or with some effort. He has to limit his vision, cabin his expansive consciousness to suit the exigencies of this ignorant world. To live in timeless, spaceless Consciousness is for him natural now; to come down to the space-time existence, he has to manage, hence 'with effort' etc. in the text.

21. The Master, Yoga's lord, at times, reveals in the Yogin who is his own, the way to the Empire of the Gods on this Earth which is no Heaven. Or, on occasions, the Yogin who is attached to Yoga and dull in his senses drunk with the joy of solitude—such a one, the Lord turns into one skilled in various ways for the work of the world's weal that is estimable.[1]

Nothing is impossible for the Yoga of the Master. To the chosen soul in whom he, the Lord of the Yoga, has set working his Yoga-power, the miracles that make their appearance are without number. To such a one, at times, mortal though he is and lives on this earth given to suffering and death, the Master reveals the sure path to the *sāmrājya*, the empire of the Gods. This kingdom of the immortals with all that it connotes viz. the rule of absolute Knowledge, Power and Delight and Immortality, is not set before the seeker as a haven of escape, as something for the future to which one has to equip himself and pass. The way to realise that beatific state while living in this world itself, to achieve immortality while living in the mortal frame, is what is revealed to him. To achieve the apparently impossible,—namely to manifest the truth, light and immortality under conditions which are their very opposite, the conditions of falsehood, darkness and death—is shown to be feasible and the way to do it is revealed to him. Or, the Lord chooses one who is immutably attached to Yoga, for a different work. He is so tenaciously attached to it that he would think of nothing else. His being is so much engrossed in the joy that solitude yields to the

[1] प्रभुर्योगेशानः क्वचिदमरसाम्राज्यपदवीम्
अनाके लोकेऽस्मिन् प्रथयति निजे योगिनि जने।
क्वचिद्योगासक्तं विजनरतिमत्तेन्द्रियजडं
जगन्मान्यश्रेयोविविधविधिदक्षं वितनुते ॥२१॥

Yogin that the outgoing senses have lost their motor-power to function in the normal way; he cannot engage in any other activity barring that of waiting on the Yoga-power at work. To the outside world, such a one is as good as dead, he does nothing, for he cannot. And even him, the Lord by his Shakti transforms into a skilful, perfect worker, an expert in working out the weal of the world. He engages himself in the work that is his part with all his enlightenment and uplifted personality; and divinely inspired, he effects the good, the *kalyāna*, the *sreyas*, of the world of fellow-beings. He is able to do that much more effectively and completely than others because he has found the true basis of activity, he is open to the right light above and the right impulsion within and he has learnt to make himself just a channel for the never-failing and all-knowing Shakti which is the true doer.

22. Being calm, one does not think of the world, nor forget it; nor does he wait upon the coiled Power in the body—Kundalini. Yet some Force (*Shakti*) forcibly possesses and holds the body and the instruments, instituting a manifold play in the art (of Yoga) that dispels delusion.[1]

He is still. He is fixed in the silence that settles on him. He no longer thinks of the world. The world around is no longer an incubus on the mind. But he does not forget it either. He is aware of the world, but is not preoccupied with it; he deals with it but is not lost in it. In a word he is in the world but not of it. He does not initiate his own movements in Sadhana, claiming for himself the wisdom of the Power at work. He does not busy himself with the awakening of the latent and coiled Power in his system—the Kundalini Shakti—the awakening and release of which is an important part in some disciplines, for this Shakti when it releases itself from the coils and rises upward towards the Sahasrara, the subtler centre in and above the head, is known to effect wonders in carrying the Sadhaka to pinnacles of realisation. But the seeker here does not cultivate it. He rests in silence, waits in adoration upon the Will of the Lord to do what he

[1] जनो जोषंभावं स्मरति न जगद्विस्मरति वा
न शक्तिं निद्राणां वपुषि भजते कुण्डलवतीम् ।
बलात् काचिच्छक्तिस्तनुकरणमाविश्य दधती
नये मोहोन्माथे जयति बहुलीलां विदधती ॥२२॥

chooses—and He indeed knows what is the best and most needful at the moment.

And he does not wait in vain. Without any effort on his part, some Force, some Shakti takes firm possession of his body, holds it and its instruments, and commences an activity which is manifold in its play, diverse in its modes and irresistible in its functioning. This Shakti with the Light that goes with it, increasingly subjects all the parts of one's being to its uplifting pressure of elimination and purification and steadily dispels the delusion to which the human being is heir. In this Sadhana the relentless task of displacing ignorance and delusion with a growing illumination is done not by the laborious process of mental discrimination and analysis but by the Power of Yoga which does it with the finesse of an artist.

23. From the high regions something comes down like the breath of life; in an instant a happy Presence presents itself. The Light clever in leading breathes in front; a state of utter stillness enters all the body's limbs.[1]

Again, as the Yoga-force is at work in oneself, now with impetuosity, now with measured gait, throwing open subtler passages and centres within, enlarging the boundaries of consciousness on the various levels of the being, the extent of the person gradually ceases to be limited to the physical body. One becomes increasingly aware of the rising tiers of consciousness, like the plateaus of the hill with which indeed the ancient mystics of the Vedas compared human existence. Something wafts down from the heights like a fresh breath of life. It does not partake of the nature of hot air of the plains of ordinary human life. Light as a breath, it is something different and carries with it an engaging freshness and strength that exhilarates. And as if on the wings of it there presents itself a happy Presence—one becomes aware of a *sānnidhya*, a presence which is auspicious, which exudes happiness and cheer. The Presence is a solid fact felt with certitude, overriding all conditions unfavourable to its manifestation, radiating a happy atmosphere all around. Presence of what? It is undoubtedly the revealing presence of the Supreme, the person of the Lord's Shakti. The Light of

[1] उदग्रायाः सीम्नः श्वसितनिभमायाति किमपि
क्षणात् कोऽपि प्रादुर्भवति सुभगः सन्निधिरपि।
विनिद्रं च ज्योतिर्विनयनपटु प्राणिति पुरो
विनिश्चेष्टा कापि स्थितिरखिलमङ्गं निविशते ॥२३॥

the Yoga-force that has guided the Sadhana hitherto, partly veiled and partly unveiled, now comes into front more and more overtly. It is vibrant with its own native power in the vicinity of the Presence. And lastly a condition of utter stillness, complete immobility of peace settles on the limbs of the body. Every limb and cell of the body becomes instinct with an ineffable stillness. Mark the sequence: a living breath from the most High sails down the heights and in its wake there presents itself a supreme Presence; the leading Light of the Yoga Power reveals itself more vividly and actively in its vicinity. But the realisation is not confined to the inner regions alone. The body is not left out. An intense stillness bathes the body and enters into its very cells and organs delivering them into a state of expectant Silence.

24. The entire body is now strong, firm with correct poise, and like a marble monument, cool (lit. the stone pillar that oozes out moisture in contact with moon's rays) and full of bliss. And this body, though material, becomes an excellent figure of Peace, made solid, a vessel and basis of the Peace: it is as such victorious.[1]

A body that is weak, restless and exposed to the attacks of forces of disease and danger can hardly be a fit receptacle for the downpour of strength and Ananda of the divine. It cannot hold these gifts and they spill out. That is why the Rishis of the past paid so much attention to the perfection of the *chamasa*, the bowl, the physical body, in which the Soma juice, the sap of life, distilled was to be filled. A body is truly strong and impervious to the onslaughts of weakening forces to the extent it is in harmony with itself, in the measure of the peace and stillness that permeate the system. Considerable attention is paid to the physical side in the Sadhana by the Yoga-force as that is the basis on which the entire edifice is to be erected. The working of the Yoga Force, the ceaseless settling in layers upon layers of peace makes the body strong and firm, perfect, harmonious. Like a marble monument, it is cool, never excited and heated; it is blissful with the joy of delight running through its veins; it is beautiful in its glow of

[1] द्रढिष्ठं साधिष्ठं तुहिनकरसम्पर्कशिशिर—
द्रवद्ग्रावस्तम्भायितमखिलमङ्गं सुखमयम् ।
घनीभूतं शान्तेः किमपि वररूपं भवदिदं
तदाधारः पात्रं जडमपि वपुर्नो विजयते ॥२४॥

purity. The marble pillar to which the body is compared for its beauty, strength and grandeur, oozes out moisture when it comes into contact with the beams of the moon; so does the body emanate peace and happiness before the Presence.

Thus does the body, constituted though it is of inert matter, gradually change into a living figure of the calm; it becomes, indeed a solid embodiment of Quietude. And fashioned into a substantial base, *adhar*, a fine vessel of the Peace, the body arrives at the very core of its own fulfilment.

We have here in this verse the echo and substance of what Sri Aurobindo says in *Savitri*. Here are the relevant lines:

> "A breath comes down from a supernal air,
> A Presence is born, a guiding Light awakes,
> A stillness falls upon the instruments:
> Fixed sometimes like a marble monument,
> Stone-calm, the body is a pedestal
> Supporting a figure of eternal Peace."

25. When this becomes evident, when all this enters the spheres of experience, then away, away with discussions dry, away with minds unpoised and perverse. Victory to this Grandeur of Sri Aurobindo, that is our Refuge and which has kept the world's weal to the keep and trust of the Mother's side-long look.[1]

When these realisations settle themselves and become active elements of our existence, who, asks the author, would care to occupy himself in dry-as-dust intellectual discussions? The truth of spiritual life, the depths of the soul and the fulfilling nature of the Guide's Glance. *Guru-katāksha* are matters for experience and not conclusions to be arrived at after interminable rambles of the mind. Certain minds are so made that they would not admit the validity of anything unless it allows itself to be formulated in the conceptual vacuum of their making. Let us leave them severely alone. Let us hymn the greatness of Sri Aurobindo, who is our

[1] इदं प्रत्यक्षं चेदनुभवपथं याति सकलं
विचारैर्निस्सारैरलमलमयुक्तैर्विमतिभिः ।
कटाक्षेऽस्मन्मातुर्विभृतभुवनक्षेम इह नः
शरण्योऽयं जीयाद् भगवदरविन्दस्यमहिमा ॥२५॥

Refuge, the finder of our means of deliverance, the donor of the boon celestial; let us bow to the Bhagawan to whom the weal of the world is so dear and so urgent that he has secured it in the hold and trust of the self-effectuating compassionate side-long glance of the Shakti, the Divine Mother. The look of the universal Mother is actively directed towards immediate fulfilment in this triple world of Ignorance and once the Master has kept the welfare and uplift of the world to its trust, that is a sure pledge of the sanction and will of the Lord which brooking no resistance is executed by Her in total redemption of the Promise.

Thus ends the Poem.

T. V. KAPALI SASTRY

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SINCERITY: to allow no part of the being to contradict the highest aspiration towards the Divine.

SRI AUROBINDO

# THE MEETING OF THE EAST AND THE WEST IN SRI AUROBINDO'S PHILOSOPHY

I HAVE made a number of comparative studies in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. My task has so far been comparatively easy, for I have had some definite subject-matter to deal with, such as, for example, the relation of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy with that of Bergson or that of Hegel or Plato, etc. Today the subject on which I propose to write is of a different character. For not only is it not possible to assert with any amount of certainty what Eastern and Western philosophy respectively stand for, but it is even contended by some that there is no such thing as Eastern or Western philosophy. This is, for example, the attitude of the reviewer of the recent book *Radhakrishnan*, published by George Allen and Unwin, in celebration of the sixtieth birthday of that distinguished philosopher, in the columns of "The Statesman", dated the 29th April last, who asserts that the distinction between Eastern and Western philosophy is absolutely arbitrary. This is perhaps a most extreme statement, but it points to the inherent difficulty of making a clear-cut division of philosophy as Eastern and Western.

## DIFFERENCE IN THE RESPECTIVE OUTLOOKS OF EASTERN AND WESTERN PHILOSOPHY: THE VALUE-CENTRIC OUTLOOK OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

At the outset I must say that whenever in this article I have used the word Eastern philosophy, I have meant Indian philosophy. The reason is partly a personal one, for I feel that I am not sufficiently familiar with Chinese or Japanese or Persian or Arabian or other non-Indian systems of philosophy in the East to be able to speak about them with confidence. Secondly, I feel that the scope of this paper will become unmanageably large if I am to discuss the standpoints of these various non-Indian systems of Eastern philosophy. So far as Indian systems of philosophy are con-

cerned, I believe there is a fundamental unity running through them, which we may call the spirit of Indian philosophy, and this is different from what we may call the spirit of Western philosophy. Without being dogmatic, it is possible, in my opinion, to speak of certain common features of Indian philosophy which distinguish it from Western philosophy. I therefore agree with Dr. Northrop who, in an article contributed to the volume *Radhakrishnan*, already referred to, states that the relation between Eastern and Western philosophy is properly expressed by the symbol E+W, and not by the equation E=W. In fact if the equation E=W were true, it would be hardly worthwhile for E to study W or *vice versa*. It is because E has got something to give W which W does not possess, and *vice versa*, that it is profitable for the East to understand the viewpoint of the West, and for the West to grasp the standpoint of the East. E+W therefore is the symbol for a healthy exchange of ideas between the East and the West, for the possibility of broadening the basis of philosophical thought by removing the isolation from which it suffers by reason of each of these currents of thought being confined within its own limits. The equation E=W would put a stop to all this.

But when we address ourselves to the task of discovering what constitutes the essence of Eastern, as distinguished from that of Western philosophy, we find ourselves in a difficulty, for as Prof. C. A. Moore, another contributor to the same volume, has pointed out, opinions have widely varied on this question. Perhaps on no philosophical question, except the fundamental one, "What is philosophy?" has opinion so varied as on this question. This, I think, however, is not a matter for regret, for it shows how important the problem is, and how it is indissolubly linked up with the life and culture of the Eastern and Western nations. From the very nature of the problem, unanimity of opinion on it cannot be expected. It would be a very sorry thing, indeed, if there were unanimity, for it would mean either that the problem had only been very superficially grasped, or, what is worse still, that philosophy in the East as well as in the West is a superficial thing which does not touch the multifarious chords of the national life of the Eastern and Western races. But if unanimity is not to be obtained, does it mean that we should refrain from giving our own views on the problem? Because unanimity on what constitutes the subject-matter of philosophy is not forthcoming, does it mean that people should stop discussing the nature of philosophy? It is only in problems the limits of which have been artificially fixed, that unanimity of this nature can be expected.

In all matters which touch the very roots of the national life of a people unanimity is out of the question.

I think, therefore, we should not hesitate to express our views on this question, even though our views may be challenged. Such a challenge, in fact, will be a very healthy sign, as it will be a proof of the interest which the problem has succeeded in creating. I have already expressed my views briefly in my book *The Spirit of Indian Philosophy*. What I propose to do here is to restate them with such amplifications as are necessary for the purposes of this article. The first thing which I stated there—and that position I have maintained throughout that book—is that Indian philosophy is value-centric, that is to say, that it does not look upon Reality as a mere Existence but as Value. And I pointed out that this appeared clearly from the statement of Maitreyi, the wife of Yajnavalkya, "What shall I do with that which does not give me immortality?", which occurred in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. The context makes it quite clear that it is not to be treated as a casual utterance of a woman but as a statement of a very important truth. Tagore in the collection of his sermons, published under the title *Santiniketana*, has attached great importance to it. Yajnavalkya intended to renounce worldly life and go to the forest, and for this reason wanted to divide his material possessions between his two wives, Maitreyi and Katyayani. As soon as Maitreyi came to know of this intention of her husband's she made the above remark. By this she wanted to convey the truth that the only thing which mattered, the only thing which could in the truest sense of the term be called real, was that which gave immortality. Reality, therefore, is to be judged in relation to the value which it confers, in this particular case, the value of immortality or salvation. The same idea is expressed in another Upanishad, namely, the Chhandogya, in the story of Sanatkumara's instruction of Narada. When Narada approached Sanatkumara for instruction relating to Brahman, he had already learnt all the sciences that had been cultivated in those days. The list of sciences which he had mastered is a very formidable one. The knowledge of even a fraction of them would be more than enough for any graduate of our universities. Yet Sanatkumara had no hesitation in telling him that all that he had learnt was nothing but names. Nor was Narada himself quite satisfied with the knowledge which he had acquired, and that is why he had come to Sanatkumara. The latter, therefore, imparted to him the knowledge of values which would take him to the other shore, that is, the shore beyond death. In the Bhagavadgita the value-standpoint is more clearly present. All knowledge, all action, all religious

devotion, all faith, in fact, everything which touches the roots of human life, is called a Yoga, that is, a way to union with God. There is perhaps no book in the entire realm of literature where the value-standpoint is so prominent as in the Gita. The Gita is a Yogasastra, or a Science of the attainment of Values, especially of the Supreme Value, namely, Union with God. Knowledge, action, devotion, faith—all are treated as so many ways of realizing values. The goal is the attainment of the Supreme Value, which is described as that "by attaining which nothing further is to be attained". Difficulties which seem insurmountable from the point of view of logic are easily solved with the help of the conception of Yoga. It is in this way that the Gita has been able to effect a wonderful reconciliation of the standpoints of Jnana, Karma and Bhakti. Srimadbhagavata also similarly effects a complete reconciliation of the standpoints of Jnana (Knowledge of Universals), Vijnana (Knowledge of Particulars or Factual Knowledge), Vairagya (Renunciation), Sraddha (Faith) and Bhakti (Devotion) through instruction relating to Salvation (Moksha), the highest Value.[1] Like the Gita, it also has a value-centric outlook. At the conclusion of the instruction given to Uddhava as recorded in this book, Lord Krishna says that He is for him all the four Purusarthas that is, the fundamental human values.[2]

It is needless to labour the point. It is sufficiently clear that the standpoint of Indian philosophy is value-centric. Even the heterodox systems of Indian philosophy, such as Buddhism and Jainism, do not differ from the orthodox systems on this point. The different systems no doubt differ widely as to what constitutes the chief value, but except in the case of the Carvaka, which does not seem to have affected much the main currents of Indian thought, they all agree that for philosophy Reality is not mere Existence but Value, and that the chief concern of philosophy is to discover the Ultimate Value.

It cannot be too strongly emphasized, however, that the standpoint that Reality is Value asserts that Reality is *also* Existence. In fact, as I have said in my Presidential Address at the 23rd session of the Indian Philosophical Congress, held in Bombay in 1948, from the point of view of the philosophy of values, even Existence must be treated as a value. Indeed, it is a limiting value. It represents the ideal limit of the process of abstraction from content. To quote what I have said in that address: "But if existence is to be

[1] Srimad Bhagavata, XI. 19.13
[2] ibid., XI. 29.33

treated as a reality and not merely as a fiction, then it must be supposed to have some content. In fact, it presents the content which we call objectivity. It stands for that feature of reality which makes it independent of subjective feeling, perceiving, imagining and thinking. Nobody can deny that it is an important feature of reality. When we are told anything, the first thing which we ask is: Is it a mere fiction of an individual's imagination or has it got objectivity? This question is the question about its existence. We may later on ask many other questions relating to its content, but this is the first question. It shows, therefore, how important this value of objectivity or existence is. In fact, it is the passport to the admission of anything to the city of philosophy. Whatever other values a thing may possess, unless it possesses this essential value of existence, it cannot enter the portals of philosophy. But the peculiarity of this value of existence is this, that although without it a thing cannot enter the domain of philosophy, with it it cannot remain long in it. Philosophy has no use for a thing which has only this one value of existence to show. It asks it quietly to move out, making room for others which have got more values to their credit."[1] At least this is what Indian philsophy does. It has no use for a thing which has only existence to its credit. And this is the view which it expresses through the mouth of Maitreyi, "What shall I do with that which does not give me immortality?"

But not only does the standpoint of the philosophy of Values assert that Reality is Existence, it also asserts that Reality is Consciousness. If Reality were unconscious, it could not be a value. Consciousness, in fact, is itself a value, just as we have seen existence itself is a value. It is what we may call the logical value. Every reality must possess three kinds of value, the value of existence or the value of objectivity, the value of consciousness or the logical value, and spiritual value. Bradley distinguished in all reality two aspects, the aspect of existence and the aspect of content, what he called respectively, the "that" and the "what". But he failed to distinguish in the content the two clearly separable elements, namely, the logical element and the value element. If he had done so, he would have made a tripartite division of the aspects of reality into an existential, logical and value aspect, as is done in Indian philosophy. He would have seen that every judgment, because it relates to reality, has a threefold character. The judgment, for example, "This cloth is white", indicates not only an existence, expressed

[1] *Whither Philosophy*? My Presidential Address at the Indian Philosophical Congress, 1948, pp. 28-29.

by the word 'this cloth' and a logical content, expressed by the word 'white', but also a value content which is not expressed but which has to be understood if the full meaning of the judgment is to be stated. The whiteness of the cloth has a value, both subjective and objective, that is to say, both for the person who makes the judgment and also those who hear it, although no explicit value predicate, like 'good' or 'bad' is used. Windelband, therefore, is not right when he says that there are some judgments which are exclusively value judgments, and others where the value predication is entirely absent. There is no judgment which is entirely a value judgment, as there is no judgment where the value element is entirely lacking. We thus arrive at the standard Indian conception of Reality as *Saccidānanda*, *Sat* expressing the existential aspect, *Cit* the logical aspect, and *Ananda* the value aspect.

If I am asked, what is the greatest single achievement of Indian philosophy? I will unhesitatingly point to this description of Reality as *Saccidānanda*. It is far in advance of any that Western philosophy has so far given us. It is the only correct description of it from the standpoint of Value. The philosophy of Values in the West has failed mainly because it has not been able to grasp the fundamental truth that if Reality is Value, it must also be Existence and Thought, and that Existence and Thought are also values. All value-philosophers in the West, with very exceptions, have fumbled and tumbled here. In fact, it is the great Serbonian bog where armies whole have sunk, and not merely value-philosophers. Somehow they have not been able to get rid of the usual Western obsession—as I shall point out presently —that Reality is Existence, and as they make a distinction between Value and Existence, they have come to the conclusion that Value is unreal. Can there be anything more absurd than this—this assertion by value-philosophers that value is unreal? Yet Münsterberg has made it, Rickert has made it, Windelband has made it, three fathers or godfathers of this philosophy!

This description of reality as *Saccidānanda* is, moreover, one of the oldest legacies of our Indian philosophy, for it goes back to the Upanishads. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (3. 9. 28) we have a statement which is very close to it, for there Brahman is described as *vijñānam ānandam brahma*. In Taitt. Up. 2. 1 also there is a close approximation to it in the form *satyam jñānam anantam*. Combining these two descriptions, we get the characterization of Brahman as *satyam jñānam anantam ānandam brahma*, which we find in the Sarvopanishatsara, and of which the abbreviated form (after dropping *anantam*) is *Saccidānanda*.

One of the most important consequences which follow from this conception of Reality as Value is the elimination of the distinction between theoretical and practical philosophy. This is not only a characteristic of all systems of Indian philosophy, but as Prof. C. A. Moore has pointed out in his article "Comparative Philosophies of Life" which he contributed to the volume "Philosophy—East and West", (published by the Princeton University Press in 1944,) it is the general standpoint of all Oriental philosophy. It is different from the mere assertion of the primacy of the practical over the theoretical. In the form in which this 'primacy' appears in Kant's philosophy, the practical is removed from the sphere of knowledge. I am sure our ancient sages would not touch this 'primacy' with a pair of tongs if it meant giving up knowledge, for knowledge was their most precious possession. What they have done is to identify knowledge with the practical.

There is, of course, a world of difference between the practical as understood in the West, and the practical as understood in Indian philosophy. The practical means in the West the same as the pragmatic, that is to say, what enables a man to be effective, to succeed, to prosper in the world of everyday life. Indian philosophy has a contempt for the practical in this sense. For it, the practical means that which helps man to attain his supreme end, his final goal. To the West, this is the reverse of the practical, for it shows no concern for the world of the here and the now. The whole difference is a difference between the respective values which are esteemed. The West esteems what may be called the pragmatic values, whereas Indian philosophy fixes its gaze upon the ultimate values. The only rational course for pragmatism is—what shall I say? If I were a Bradleyan, I would say, to commit suicide. But not being a Bradleyan, I would say, to be transformed. Yes, pragmatism's destiny is to be transformed. It is a bastard born of the illegitimate union of teleology and rank empiricism. What gives it importance is its teleology. But its teleology unfortunately is the teleology of the swine. Improve its teleology, radically transform it, and then you will get to our Indian view of the practical. In fact, the Indian view is a purified and ennobled pragmatism—a pragmatism that has received its second birth, has obtained its *dvijatva*, as we may call it, using the very significant terminology of our Indian social philosophy, by dropping its association with empiricism.

But the Indian view of the practical suffers from one limitation: it takes into account only the individual—it has no cosmic reference. The salvation

it speaks of is salvation only for the individual. It is not cosmic salvation. Not that in the history of Indian philosophy there has never been any reference to cosmic salvation. When the Buddha made his famous statement that he would not have Nirvana for himself unless the whole world got it, he of course pleaded for cosmic salvation. So, too, there are various hints, scattered over the ancient texts, especially the Upanishads, which point to cosmic salvation. For instance, the famous prayer in Is. Up. 15 is an invocation to the Lord to lift the veil that hides the face of Truth, so that its full light may illumine the whole universe. The benefit spoken of here evidently accrues to the whole universe, and not merely to an individual. There are again some Vedantists who maintain the standpoint known as "ekamuktau sarvamuktih", the standpoint, namely, that as Avidya is one, if it is removed in the case of one individual, it is removed for all.[1] But although there have been instances where cosmic salvation has been hinted at, yet the general standpoint of Indian philosophy has been that of individual salvation. There is practical unanimity among the different schools of Indian thought on this point, although there is a wide divergence of opinion as to what constitutes salvation and also about the methods of obtaining it.

The standpoint of Indian philosophy, therefore, is on the whole individualistic on the question of salvation. Western philosophy, although it does not speak of such a highly spiritual end as salvation, yet takes a universal or cosmic standpoint with regard to whatever end it puts forward as the goal of life. The hedonist end, for instance, of "the greatest good of the greatest number" may not be any spiritual end at all, but it has reference to the whole of mankind and not merely to an individual. On this point we really have to take our hats off to the West. The problem is to combine the Indian spiritual viewpoint with the cosmic standpoint of the West, and we shall see in the sequel how Sri Aurobindo has tackled it.

As is to be expected on account of its intimate connection with practical life, Yoga, as the practical method of obtaining salvation, occupies a very important place in all systems of Indian philosophy, though the methods of Yoga vary very widely from system to system. In fact, the relation between philosophy and yoga is conceived somewhat as follows: Philosophy discovers the final end or goal of man; having discovered it, it hands it over to Yoga that it may devise means of practically realizing it. The two therefore work in the closest co-operation with each other. And as Reli-

[1] See *Vedanta Paribhaṣa*, chap. VIII where this view is mentioned and refuted.

gion, from the point of view of personal realization, is nothing but Yoga, it follows that in Indian philosophy there is always a very close alliance between Religion and Philosophy. This is in fact one of the most remarkable features of Indian culture: it has never experienced any conflict between Philosophy and Religion. The main reason for this beautiful alliance is of course this: Religion has never tried to usurp the functions of Philosophy. The unfortunate conflict between the two in the West is due to the fact that Religion wanted to be all in all, that it not only laid down what values were to be pursued, but even what facts were to be accepted as true. This naturally brought Religion not only into conflict with Philosophy but also with Science.

Coming now to the problem of Evolution, we are afraid this problem has not received as much attention from Indian philosophy as it has from Western philosophy. The reason is mainly that Indian philosophy is primarily concerned with the fate of the individual. It is somewhat indifferent to the question of the fate of the world. The orthodox Vedanta of the Sankara school treats the whole question as unreal. Even in the realistic systems the problem of Evolution has not received much consideration. The only exception is the Samkhya, where it has received a very elaborate treatment. But even there, as remarked by Dr. Radhakrishnan,[1] the whole problem has been treated without any definite plan. It is not clear, for example, why the stages of evolution should be what they are, and what the connection between one stage and another is. There is a still more fundamental difficulty, pointed out by Dr. Dasgupta,[2] and that concerns the question why Prakriti should evolve at all, that is to say, why the state of equilibrium of the Gunas should be disturbed at all. The answer of the Samkhya is that this is due to the transcendental influence of the Purusas, which influence means that there is an inherent teleology in the Gunas by virtue of which all their movements or modifications take place in such a way as to serve the purposes of the Purusas. But, as has been pointed out by Sankara,[3] it is difficult to understand how the purusas can have any purpose for the Samkhya has expressly declared that the purusas are *nirguṇa* and *niṣkriya*, attributeless and inert. Moreover, even supposing that the

[1] Radhakrishnan: *Indian Philosophy*, (2nd Edn.) p. 274. Published by George Allen and Unwin.

[2] S. N. Das Gupta: *History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 247, Ist Edition, Published by the Cambridge University Press.

[3] Sankara's Commentary on Brahma Sutras, 2. 2. 6.

purusas can have any purpose, there is no reason to suppose that their purposes must necessarily be the same, unless there is a pre-established harmony among them of which the Samkhya says nothing. The position of the Yoga philosophy is better, for it attributes the disturbance of the equilibrium of the gunas to the will of God. But God in the Yoga philosophy has no organic connection with the rest of the system. It is, in fact, a mere appendage, put in to answer some difficulties, and is a sort of *deux ex machina*, like the God of Berkeley or Leibniz. Coming back to the Samkhya, even if we suppose that all the purusas wanted at least to have some experience, and that this is all that is needed to break the equilibrium of the gunas, this will not explain the subsequent process of evolution, for the needs of the individual purusas differ widely, and the direction of evolution cannot really be the same for all. In the case of salvation the Samkhya admits that the need of the emancipated individual is totally different from the needs of the others. That individual has obtained the requisite knowledge of the distinction between Purusa and Prakriti, and his need therefore is that evolution should stop, while others require that it should go on. But in the case of the starting of evolution and its subsequent march, it is assumed that the needs of all the individuals point in the same direction. The truth is, there is no passage from absolute individual pluralism to cosmic unity.

Moreover, the Samkhya, like the rest of the Indian systems of philosophy, believes in the cyclical view of the universe, that is, in the view that evolution is always succeeded by dissolution, and *vice versa*. Further, even during a period of evolution, there is the cycle of the four yugas, so that even during this period it is not all evolution, but there are ups and downs. But in a cyclical view of the universe, evolution becomes meaningless.

The Samkhya attempt, therefore, to give a cosmic character to evolution has failed, because it has not been able to get rid of the cyclical view of the universe, according to which evolution and dissolution always follow each other in a cyclical order, and secondly, because on account of its extremely individualistic standpoint, it views all problems of evolution from the standpoint of the interest of the individual. In contrast to this, the standpoint of Western philosophy is cosmic, though it suffers from the defect that it is not sufficiently spiritual. We shall see in the sequel how beautifully Sri Aurobindo has combined here also the spiritual outlook of Indian philosophy with the cosmic standpoint of the West.

*(To be continued)*

S. K. MAITRA

# THE DOCTRINE OF MAYA

ACCORDING to the Integral Idealism of Sri Aurobindo ultimate reality is a manifold unity; it is at once a supra-cosmic Transcendence, a cosmic Universality, and a self-differentiated plurality of Individuals. The world of plurality cannot be said to be unreal or illusory even from the standpoint of the Absolute; it is rather a rhythmic expression of the Absolute Spirit or *Saccidānanda*. The existence of the world corresponds to certain truths in the nature of the Absolute. The truths of the creative self-vision of the Absolute are imperative necessities such as turn its inherent possibilities into the actualities of the cosmic manifestation. These necessities do not, of course, arise from any deficiency or lack of perfection on the part of the Absolute, because the Absolute is eternally perfect and self sufficient. The threads of necessity that link up the world with the Absolute spring from the delight of self-manifestation in the heart of the Absolute. The supreme bliss, the fullness of joy, which constitutes the essence of the highest Spirit has a duality of aspects: it contains in the first instance a delight of immutable *being* which makes the Spirit an eternally perfect supra-cosmic Transcendence; and it contains also a delight of mutable *becoming* which makes the Spirit the immanent Self of the world and of the individual. It is the delight of mutable becoming which holds within itself the creative urge and supplies the necessity of the cosmic manifestation. So it may be said that the world flows from the creative joy or the self-expansive delight of the Spirit; it is supported and thoroughly penetrated by the cosmic Self which is a poise or form of manifestation of the Spirit; and it is contained as a possibility or in a form of mystical latency in the supra-cosmic Supreme which is the Spirit in its essential and intrinsic nature.

In expounding the above view one comes into sharp conflict with a way of thinking which has the backing of deep spiritual experience, and which has also a great attraction for the human intellect, I mean, the doctrine of Maya or the theory of Kevaladvaita. Mayavada or Kevaladvaitavada is the theory of unqualified monism or non-dualism which combines within

itself the merits of logical simplicity and spiritual boldness. There is no denying the fact that it is a magnificent achievement of speculative endeavour, and it also represents a lofty summit of spiritual experience. But still it suffers from some inherent limitations of its own. These limitations should be evident to all who are alive to the necessity of combining comprehensiveness of outlook with depth of insight. The doctrine of Maya has lent itself to a wide diversity of interpretation, and small minds have often construed or misconstrued it in very gross and perverse ways. There is without doubt great necessity for the removal of such perverse misconstructions of the doctrine of Maya, so that the truth of spiritual experience embodied in it may be brought out into clear relief. But there is also a greater necessity for the realisation that though Mayavada is a remarkably bold step forward in the history of the spiritual enterprise of mankind, it is certainly not the last word in man's spiritual experiments with the Truth. An appreciation of its sublimity and transcendent beauty should not blind one to its deficiency in breadth of outlook or comprehensiveness of survey. In his over-anxiety to guard it against actual and possible misunderstanding, the Mayavadin should not block the way to fruitful and constructive criticism. We propose to offer below a brief account of Mayavada as it has been presented by some of its best exponents, and then consider in what respects it requires to be transcended in order to obtain an integral and sovereignly effective vision of the Truth.

## WHAT MAYAVADA STANDS FOR

The fundamental contention of Mayavada is that the world of multitudinous names and forms that we experience is not what we normally believe it to be,—it is not permanent, not real, not possessed of any value or significance. *Jagatprapañca* or the flux of cosmic-existence derives whatever reality it seems to possess from Maya, which is the cosmic principle of illusion. Maya is in the nature of Ignorance or Ajnana which is not mere absence of knowledge but a positive principle of creativity that projects false appearances on the basis of the one abiding reality. Maya or Ajnana is said to have a twofold function or power: one is *āvaranaśakti* or the power of hiding or obscuring the true nature of reality, and the other is *vikṣepaśakti* or the power of projecting or superimposing false appearances on the locus of the hidden reality. The classical analogy frequently cited to illustrate the operation of the Ignorance or Avidya is the rope-snake illusion or the mother-of-pearl-

silver illusion. When I mistake the rope for the snake, my awareness of the snake as an illegitimate transference on the locus of the rope may be said to be transformed here into an illusory perception of the snake. Now, Mayavada contends that almost a similar thing happens in the case of our awareness of the world of phenomenal existence. Through the operation of Maya there is first of all an obscuration, screening or concealment of the true nature of the ultimate reality,—the unique, indivisible and immutable Spirit or Brahman. On the basis of such obscuration there is the projection or illusory superimposition of an endless succession of countless forms. Ignorance of the true nature of Brahman may be said to be transformed into an illusory cognition of the world of name and form. But just as the transformation of my ignorance of the rope into an illusory perception of the snake does not involve the slightest change in the nature of the rope itself, so also the countless changes and divisions which are characteristic of the world-process do not involve the slightest change or modification of the nature of Brahman who is the eternally unchangeable substratum of the entire phenomenal show. This is precisely what is meant by saying that the world is the creation of Maya or Avidya. So the perpetual changes of the world-process must be quite compatible with the eternal perfection and changelessness of that which is truly real. When the illusion of the snake is dissipated, the snake is declared to be unreal for all the periods of time, and it is clearly realised that the rope did not even for the duration of the illusion get actually metamorphosed into the snake. Similarly, when the false knowledge of the world is dissipated by *Brahmasākṣātkāra*, i.e., direct acquaintance with the Truth, it is clearly realised that the world is an eternally cancelled false appearance, and that Brahman does not undergo any real process of change or transformation into the world of nature and finite selves even during the period of our bondage in the world.

### IN WHAT SENSE IS THE WORLD MITHYA?

Now, what is precisely meant by saying that the world is in the nature of an illusory superimposition on Brahman, or, in other words, that it is *mithyā* or maya-begotten? Is the world wholly unreal in the sense of being an absolute naught? Or, is it a subjective construction of our own mind on the basis of some objective datum? The doctrine of Maya has been subjected to some perverse misunderstandings against which one must be on one's guard. From Sankara's relentless criticism of Nagarjuna's theory of

*Sunyavāda* (theory of void), it is evident that he does not look upon the world as a mere void or *sunya* when he declares it to be *mithyā*. The world is a positive fact of our experience, and a positive fact of experience can by no means emerge out of nothing—*ex nihilo nihil fit*. The world cannot also be *mithyā* or unreal in the sense of being formally self-contradictory. A formal self-contradiction like the 'barren mother' or the 'round square' can as little function as the object of our experience as a mere non-entity. Such self-contradictory entities owe their origin to some sort of verbal jugglery, and cannot really be even so much as thought of by us. There are some entities such as the sky-flower or the hare's horn which can pretty well be imagined by us but which are never presented to our perceptual experience. Western logicians declare them to be formally true in so far as they are free from internal logical contradiction, although they are certainly materially false by reason of their being contradicted by the nature of the outside world. They are the free creations of our fancy. The Sanskrit term for such imaginary or fanciful things is *alika*. *Māyāvāda* does not look upon the world as unreal in the sense of being *alika*, because the world is obviously not a free creation of our fancy but is rather obtrusively thrust upon us and is 'given' to our perceptual experience. Thus we find that the word '*mithyā*' as understood by *Māyāvāda* is to be construed neither as a mere naught nor as a formal self-contradiction nor as a figment of imagination.

Nor is the world, according to *Māyāvāda*, merely a subjective construction of our mind or intellect, as will be evident from Sankara's scathing criticism of the *Yogācāra* position of *Vijñānavāda*. *Vijñānavāda* looks upon the world as the objectification of our *vijñāna* or subjective cognition. It holds that our perception of the world's external objects essentially consists in mistaking our subjective cognitions for objective outward facts. Sankara points out that such a mistaking of internal cognitions for external things would have been impossible had there been no objectively real outward facts at all. It is unavailing for the *Vijñānavādin* to suggest that the world is the creation of the understanding just as dream-objects are the creation of the mind during sleep, because there is a fundamental difference between dream experience and waking experience, the former being contradicted by the latter (*bādhita*). Dream experience presupposes waking experience in so far as it is with the aid of the impressions (*saṁskāras*) left in the mind by the latter that dreams are fashioned. Sankara's criticism of *Vijñānavāda* thus unmistakably shows that when he declares the world to be *mithyā*

he is not to be understood to suggest that the world is just an externalisation or objectification of our subjective cognitions. *Māyāvāda* must therefore be sharply distinguished from the mentalism or subjectivism of the Berkeleyan or of the Fichteian type. For Berkeley the essence of a thing consists in being perceived (*esse est percipi*). Sankara argues much with the emphasis of a neo-realist of the present day that the object of perception, by reason of the very fact that it is perceived by us, must be admitted to have some reality of its own. Even the content of illusory perception cannot, therefore, be resolved into a mere non-entity or a subjective fact and must be accorded some peculiar type of being of its own independent of our perception of it. For Fichte the world is the self-objectification or self-externalisation of the Absolute Ego or Subject; but for Sankara the Subject and the Object are irreducible one to the other, even though their dualism may not be accepted as an ultimate fact. In his judgement, the subject presupposes the object as much as the object presupposes the subject. Whatever is an object of cognition must *ipso facto* enjoy an objective reality of its own. Thus Sankara shows himself an uncompromising realist from the epistemological point of view. The object is for him as much real as the empirical subject or the objective consciousness. The object can no more be reduced to the subject than the subject can be reduced to the object. But still both the empirical subject and the empirical object can be resolved into the transcendental Spirit or pure unobjective consciousness. The transcendental Spirit is believed by the *Māyāvādin* to transcend the subject-object relation as much as it transcends the substance-attribute relation.

In the view of *Māyāvāda*, then, the world is *mithyā* neither in the sense of being a mere nothing or zero, *sunya*, nor in the sense of being a meaningless self-contradiction, *tuccha*, nor in the sense of being a creature of fancy, *alika*, nor in the sense of being an objectified cognition, *vijñāna*. Eminent authorities on the teaching of the Sankara-Vedanta are agreed that the world is *mithyā* in the sense of being *anirvacanīya*, i.e., logically indescribable. The categories of being and non-being are alike inadequate in ascertaining the ontological status of the world. The world cannot be said to be non-existent or unreal in as much as it is a positive datum of our immediate perceptual experience; it functions as the given factor in the knowledge situation. But the world cannot also be accepted as real or existent, because it is contradicted on our realisation of the supreme Truth or Brahman. As soon as one attains "knowledge by identity" of Brahman, the whole world

of objective appearance disappears from his vision and shrinks into the unreal. So the world can be said to be neither real nor unreal, nor both real and unreal at the same time in as much as reality and unreality are palpably self-contradictory conceptions. It is this logical indescribability which is signified by the term '*mithyā*'.

(*To be continued*)

HARIDAS CHAUDHURI

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Effort means straining endeavour. There can be an action with a will in it in which there is no strain of effort.

SRI AUROBINDO

# SRI AUROBINDO *

THE life and work of Sri Aurobindo are encyclopaedic; his personality and achievements have different facets; at least five different facets: the man, the man of action, the man of letters, the seer and the Yogi.

Gifted with a vast intellect, great and noble emotions and unbounded aspirations, his ambition was to measure the immeasurable. Unflinching in his devotion to duty on the threshold of life, he made a plan of life and pursued it steadfastly. Later, the sense of duty grew and he embraced man, in all his aspects, with a parent's ceaseless solicitude.

He was an artist of life. As a professor, as I knew him, perfect; as a patriot, he was a passionate devotee of the Motherland in 1907 quivering with passionate longing for her freedom and greatness. On 9th July 1950, when I last saw him, he was a thing of living beauty in his voice, manner and dress. His personality had assumed a beauty far surpassing that which we associate with human beings.

Was Aurobindo a man of action? It is a superficial view which identifies a man of action necessarily with restless hours, ceaseless jostling with men, with public meetings, and newspaper headlines. If action implies power to move men, Aurobindo was a great Karmayogi. He left the coveted career of a Civil Servant to work for the country. As an obscure professor, he, in his "New Lamps for Old" first raised the unequivocal battle-cry of "Freedom". During the Partition of Bengal days he actually joined the National Movement, gave up service and prospects, started 'Bandemataram', established a Technological Institute, made men dance to the tune of his powerful pen and voice driving them to action. He moved thousands to take to boycotting British goods, singing the Vande Mataram. He went to jail, and in view of his connection—distant though not intimate with the first terrorist movement—he risked his life.

*Speech delivered at Sri Aurobindo Niketan Meeting at the Constitution Club, New Delhi, on the 16th August 1951.

Then he retired. 'Retired' is not the proper word, for, by his sudden withdrawal from direct contact, he made his pen and personality the media of galvanising men's mind and action. Did Aurobindo inspire men to action? His personality became integrated; the spark of action was communicated not by physical contact, but by words, by the imponderable power of an integrated personality, a medium of action more powerful than word or pen or social contact. In distant parts of the world, his words echoed in devoted hearts impelling them to make experiments with life itself.

As a man of letters, Sri Aurobindo was one of the greatest literary men of any time. He has written on almost all subjects of intellectual and emotional interest. His poems have a boldness of imagination almost unequalled in modern literature. Imbued with the best traditions of Greek and Sanskrit literatures, he was the master of the living phrase of beauty. Few now know the scathing sarcasm, the passionate denunciation, the biting incisiveness of the leaders of the Bande Mataram when he slashed the Moderate Politicians of India in 1905 and 1907. In those days, his words were power-winged shafts, with envenomed tips. In his letter to his disciples later, we find a rare affection, a light touch, an endearing solicitude. In some of his early speeches like that of Uttarpara, the heart-going directness and simplicity overwhelms the soul with the inspiring, far-visioned compelling power of a Master; he often spoke and wrote, as was said of Jesus, 'with authority'.

For the ordinary reader, his philosophic works are too difficult. Even a student of philosophy finds Aurobindo's thoughts moving in a sphere of distinctive ideas and it becomes difficult to follow their line unless one is familiar with the world in which he lived and had his being.

As a Seer, he was one of the greatest in the world. He tried to sense the beautiful in word and phrase and life and personality. He was the first in India to squarely see the conflict between India and Britain. He was again the first to envisage a vast struggle to drive out the British. After the Russo-Japanese War, he first gave us the slogan—"Asia for Asiatics". During the Partition of Bengal Movement, he made of the drawing room nationalism of the day, a militant and powerful all-embracing emotion. He invested the boycott of British goods with a new political significance. With vivid passion he made 'Vande Mataram' a 'Mantra' of undying martyrdom to secure the freedom and glory of India. He was the first again to emphasise that Indian freedom can only come by non-violent action, though in principle, at appropriate places, he declined to abjure violence.

He prophesied that after him will come someone who will achieve which he could not.[1]

He brought the whole range of Indian culture under his transvaluing gaze. He found a new meaning in our art, our poetry, our classics, our religious and social movements. He has been the Prophet of Indian Renaissance.

More, he drank deep at the fountain source of Indian thought and religion and helped in the secularisation of the Hindu religious sentiment. In the Motherland, he found the deity of his heart. In being ready to invite martyrdom for Her freedom and glory, he discovered Karma Yoga; and when in the Uttarpara speech, he said 'Nationalism is Sanatana Dharma and Sanatana Dharma is Nationalism', he restored to India the universal creed for the uplift of man for which she had lived during the ages. Sanatana Dharma to him was not the castes, the creeds, the temples and the rituals. It was the one and the universal law embracing humanity in one elevating and sweeping movement of the Spirit.

He gave a new value to the Vedas. He saw beyond the philosophies of all ages and produced a system more comprehensive than what had been formulated by Shankar or Kant or Spencer. And like a true Prophet, he replanted pholosophy in the realities of life, and uplifted the reality of crude existence into a continuum of matter and life and mind seeking to evolve Over-mind and ready to bring forth a new race of beings working to realise the Super-Mind to replace the present inferior race.

He saw into the heart of things. In July, 1950, for over twenty minutes he spoke to me on contemporary affairs with a thorough grasp of what was happening in the world. His perception of the political situation in India was always unerring. When the World War came in 1939 and when the whole country wanted to maintain neutrality, it was he of the unerring eye who said that the triumph of England and France was the triumph of the divine forces over the demonic forces. We were very angry, but it was a fact. If the Allies had not won, the darkness of Fascism would have descended upon mankind.

He spoke again when Sir Stafford Cripps came with his first proposal. He said: 'India should accept it'. We rejected the advice. We who rejected

[1] What Sri Aurobindo actually said is that he "was compelled to recognise that the nation was not yet sufficiently trained to carry out his policy and programme....he saw that the hour of these movements had not come and that he himself was not their destined leader." *The Editor.*

it had sound reasons for it, but today we realise that if the first proposal had been accepted, there would have been no partition, no refugees and no Kashmir problem.

Last year he expressed himself in favour of supporting the United Nations in the Korean War. He was again right. In the United Nation's action in Korea, the civilised world, for the first time, combined to fight an unjustified aggression. For the first time, a composite world action became a reality and, but for United Nation's action, it would have been a different world today.

Last year he talked to me of India and Pakistan. In a prophetic vein he said 'they will be united'. I respectfully demurred. He added 'Pakistan must be brought within the ambit'. Yes, of cooperation and allied strength. But when?

I come to the last facet of Sri Aurobindo—that of a Yogi. I saw from 1904 to 1906, how the Europeanised Professor took to Yoga. We took to finding out what Yoga was, because our professor, under whose influence we were, had taken to Yoga. Few can speak of a Yogi, without having studied and practised in Yoga. But I knew the gentleman under whom he began to study; and he was an adept. At the first effort, 45 years ago, Sri Aurobindo attained a stage higher than most students in Yoga. In 1909 he communed with God and that led him to change in life. For 40 years he ceaselessly reached towards progressive realisation. His letters to his pupils are the only practical hints on Yoga in our voluminous literature on Yoga, showing a mastery over the whole range of transformation both of the mind and the spirit into Divine Consciousness. All his writings indicate that complete universality of outlook, that active movement of the spirit, that freedom from fear, wrath and attachment—which are the high privilege of the Emancipated. The descent of the Divine Consciousness which he teaches is itself the result of an experience achieved in a bold endeavour to reach unexplored regions of the Spirit. A Yogi is the one who attempts an ascent to Divine Consciousness. An Avatar is the one who is born in Divine Consciousness. Perhaps Aurobindo is the only Yogi who individually achieved an ascent to Divine Consciousness and attempted to bring it down for collective good. Heir to Ramakrishna he has given to Indian culture a fresh vigour and a new validity, and, to the world, a message of hope.

And here we are in a region where the ordinary faculties of man stand dumb-founded, in all humility.

K. M. MUNSHI

# REVIEW

1) **The Spiritual Experience of Simone Weil** by *M. M.Darvy.* (Burning Glass Paper No. 27)

2) **Gustave Thibon** by *Stanley Godman.* (Burning Glass Paper No. 28) Price 2s. Ridgeway House, Shorme, Kent.

The *Burning Glass* publications, even though a cry in the wilderness, in the present convulsive times, hold out the promise of the new dawn of a spiritual age. "The reason for this undertaking", as the publishers say, "is the belief that we live in an age of crises when previous patterns of faith and culture are dissolving and new patterns in formation, that the life of the Spirit has been largely lost but that by that way of life alone can our world be redeemed from the doom which impends upon it and the rediscovery of that way demands a re-conception and re-statement of traditional faith. The purpose of the *Burning Glass* is therefore to offer a forum and focus for as many sincere attempts to seek and express the life of the Spirit in and for our time as possible from whatever quarter they may come." This is amply borne out by the various papers that have been published by the *Burning Glass.* It is a most laudable attempt and a ray of hope in an otherwise dismal situation. For us the very fact, that on a patch of earth in the West, the realization that humanity can be saved only by the rediscovery of the life of the Spirit, has taken root is a most cheering symptom and a sure sign that the world will be saved.

The two books under review survey briefly the life and work of two most saintly and self-sacrificing personalities who devoted themselves with an intense zeal and ardour to the pursuit of an ideal which in their view could materialise the most ancient and persistent human dream of a reconciliation and symbiosis of flesh and Spirit. Assuredly there is no greater hope for humanity than the bridging of the gulf between Spirit and Matter; for, only then can the earth become, 'the home of the Wonderful and life Beatitude's kiss;' and yet it is hard to resist a twinge of disappointment at

the end of the paper on 'Gustave Thibon'; for according to him, "It is in marriage that the union of the highest love and the most earthly necessities is perfectly accomplished," and this is Godman's comment: "Elsewhere the conflict between spiritual values and vital energies is less easy to appease and overcome". We cannot lend countenance to such facile compromises because we clearly see the specious nature of the harmony they promise. A reconciliation of Life and Spirit is possible, even inevitable, in course of time but not by a policy of holding with the hare and running with the hounds. The vital energies have to forsake their blind impulsions and consciously obey the Light of the Spirit, then only can a true harmony be established. In the truly spiritual life the vital energies are never repressed as Thibon fears, rather they are purified and uplifted so as to be capable of manifesting the wideness, light, peace and purity and strength of the Divine consciousness and for such a glorious consummation it is incumbent on the seeker of the Divine life that by a spiritual discipline of purification he drives out puissantly and exhaustively all those passions that tie the soul down to the level of the animal life and prevent it from soaring in the regions of eternal Light, Bliss and Freedom. Surely the aim is not a mere escape and a flight from the world-abyss but to bring down here on earth the Divine Power, but, that is possible only for those who have brushed aside the allurements of the world and can thus live in the Truth-consciousness and pierce mortality with the burning shafts of the Infinite's Light. We do not share the social illusion that the nature of sex changes when it comes arrayed in the habiliments of a religious marriage to lay claim upon the aspiring soul. Of course, marriage is a most useful institution for governing the ordinary human life, but as a sanctimonious garb put on by sex it has no place in spiritual life and even in ordinary life it is to be tolerated as a necessary evil or a lesser evil. We have laid stress on this because a complete mastery of the sex energy is the corner-stone of the spiritual edifice and as Sri Aurobindo says, "The attempt to sublimate it, favoured by many modern mystics in Europe, is a most rash and perilous experiment. For it is when one mixes up sex and spirituality that there is the greatest havoc." If the vital consciousness remains a turbid mixture, the turbidity is bound to affect the purity of the spiritualised mind and seriously hinder the upward turn of the forces of the body.

We agree with Thibon when he discerns in contemporary literature a spiritual trend which he describes accurately as, "a broadening of the ways

of the Lord, a descent of the sacred into the spiritual, of the eternal into the temporal, of the spirit into life", but spiritual practice and experience shake their heads when he cherishes the hope that, "Passion and instincts may be displayed in their biological purity and in full communion with spiritual love." But Gustave Thibon has undoubtedly many profound truths to teach to the modern world and many of his illuminating utterances will serve as fingers of light pointing the way out of the present predicament as, for instance, he says, "It is the problem of replacing the 19th century concept of lateral development by one of vertical growth, of growth from 'husbandry through the home and the community to a spiritual concept of civilisation'. Again, he has expressed a deep and potent truth in these words: "Human nature is not a prison from which man must escape in order to enter into God.....it is rather a dwelling which must be purified for God to enter in". His genuine spiritual endeavour is evident from these words: "The human problem is not the choice between the senses and spirit but between the domination of the senses and the domination of the spirit." Indeed, man must liberate himself from the shackles of the senses, breaking the magical circle and arise into the glory of his deathless existence. Sri Aurobindo has most vividly and luminously described that state of spiritual transformation in these lines:

> "I am no more a vassal of the flesh,
> A slave to Nature and her leaden rule;
> I am caught no more in the senses' narrow mesh.
> My soul unhorizoned widens to measureless sight,
> My body is God's happy living tool,
> My spirit a vast sun of deathless light."

Oddly enough, Thibon lays too much stress on external changes such as the complete abolition of machinery and with it the large-scale industry. He glamorises the agriculturist's life and invests it with a spiritual glory and prescribes it as the panacea for all the ills of modern life. We trace the malady of the century to causes that are primarily psychological and spiritual. Modern man has cut himself adrift from his Divine Essence and has gone off at a tangent. The aim of life is no longer to know and carry out the Divine Will but to pamper to the animal in man. Evidently, such a course must lead towards the brink of a precipice. The remedy also lies in ceasing to be tossed about by the waves of the vital passions by knocking the doors

of the inner sanctuary and re-establishing the broken links. The methods to be employed are, in the very nature of things, psychological and spiritual, viz., a spiritual aspiration and orientation of the being, a change in the conception of man's true nature and the aim of his existence. This done the rest can follow of its own accord. Man's actions must spring from a higher consciousness and then every work will have the same value and will lose its drudgery. While we are fully alive to some of the soul-killing effects of the large-scale industry, its reducing the individual to a mere cog in the great machine, we cannot lose sight of its immense contributions to the enrichment of modern life. Time and space have shrunk to the vanishing point and the whole world has become a single human family; we are constantly receiving powerful streams of knowledge from other countries and sending back our own thought-currents to the whole world. No amount of glamorising of agriculture can put back the hands of the clock, and tempt man to live in the 'narrow, domestic walls'.

Machinery has not to be discarded and thrown overboard but to be reorganised in such a way that every worker gets full opportunities for the efflorescence of his genius and feels the joy of work done in a spirit of consecration and comradeship. Bertrand Russell has shown in his book 'Authority and the Individual' how it can be successfully done by a process of decentralisation and federating of industries.

There is admittedly a disequilibrium between the tremendous powers that have been tapped from Nature by 'a victorious analysis of the externalities of Nature' and the small human ego full of ignorance and myopic in vision that wields them sometimes for its good and at others for the annihilation of the race. The Mother's message on the atomic bomb is the only right solution:

"The atomic bomb is in itself the most wonderful achievement and the sign of a growing power of man over the material nature. But what is to be regretted is that this material progress and mastery is not the result of and in keeping with a spiritual progress and mastery which alone has the power to contradict and counteract the terrible danger coming from these discoveries. We cannot and must not stop progress, but we must achieve it in an equilibrium between the inside and the outside."

Simone Weil is a typical Christian soul who led a life of complete self-abnegation and her sympathetic heart led her to throw aside the pleasures

of a life of ease and comfort and to share in person all the hardships and tribulations of the underdog. She 'herself became a factory worker identifying herself with the anonymous man; the miseries of others penetrated her body and her soul!'

The author summarises her spiritual characteristics in these words: "An absolute generosity, a severity towards herself which is surely without parallel, an uncompromising purity, an almost eccentric asceticism which was sometimes seriously detrimental to her health". The intensity and ardour of her spiritual aspiration unmistakably shine through her writings. She knew that the seeker of Truth must leave behind him the burden of the past, the religious dogmas and conventions and should not see the Reality with the eyes of prepossession. She says, "But that religious feeling may stem from the spirit of truth, it is absolutely essential that one should be prepared to abandon one's religion, even though thus one lose all reason for living, should it be anything but the truth". Mother in speaking about Religion said, "Things have an inner value and become real to you only when you have acquired them by the exercise of your free choice, not when they have been imposed upon you. If you want to be sure of your religion you must choose it....Step back from all that forms your natural inheritance, made up and forced upon you by Nature's blind mechanical process; draw within and look quietly and dispassionately at things. Appraise them, choose freely. Then you can say with an inner truth, 'This is my family, this my country, this is my religion' " (Words of the Mother).

The width of her spirit and deep insight can be seen from these words: "Religion in the guise of a source of consolation is an impediment to the true faith; in the same way atheism is a purification." The fanatic adherants of religion have always been its worst enemies because they have always distorted and wrested it to obtain from it a moral support for their bestiality and sadism. The atheist is definitely more honest and sincere in his quest for Reality and renders a valuable service to Truth in sweeping aside all the accretions of falsehood. Simone Weil's definition of humility is most original and perfectly true. 'Humility is to refuse to exist outside of God!'

But we may be forgiven in pointing out what we feel as some grave defects from which her spiritual thought suffers. Regarding vital passions she sometimes holds the moralist's attitude. According to the moral law there are good desires and bad desires as also righteous and unrighteous anger and hatred. In the moral eye a burning desire to remove the suffering of

others is not only permissible but highly commendable. But all these are incompatible with spiritual life. There are no legitimate vital movements or desires, all must be 'torn from their bleeding roots' and replaced by spiritual Calm, Peace, Purity and Power. No outgoing energy can be permitted to drag the being into its turbulent waters: all must move under the control and direction of the Spiritual Consciousness. Each time that a vital impulse is allowed to have its own way, it creates its opposite reaction of depression, despair, a sense of futility and even repentance and thus the consciousness remains bound in a game of see-saw. Simone Weil did not perceive this clearly, otherwise how could she harbour 'implacable hatreds'? Furthermore, we notice a contradiction in her attitude towards suffering. What she intensely desires for herself she hates intensely in others. On the one hand she abhors hardships and, the suffering of others makes her wince and on the other she has a blinding passion to impose it on herself so much so that she says, "Whenever I think of the passion of Christ I commit the sin of envy" and her biographer adds, "She even envies the good thief since, during the Crucifixion, he is beside Christ and in the same plight. This privilege seemed to her more enviable than that of being at the right hand of Christ in His glory". Certainly pain and suffering have a great value in so far as they smite awake the human being to the imperfections that dog his life and to the necessity of discovering his Divine Soul which is beyond all pain and ignorance and is immortal. Sri Aurobindo has in these lines assigned to suffering its true role:

> "Pain is the hammer of the gods to break
> A dead resistance in the mortal's heart,
> His slow inertia as of living stone.
> If the heart were not forced to want and weep,
> His soul would have lain down content, at ease,
> And never thought to exceed the human start
> And never learned to climb towards the Sun."

That is the utility of universal pain and therefore a soul that has already turned towards the infinite need not go out of its way to invite suffering and torture on itself. It should rather be concentrated exclusively and single-pointedly on the one aim to ascend to the Divine Consciousness and rather remove from its way all causes of distraction and it need hardly be said that in the initial stages a body besieged by pain is bound

to act as a lead on the wheels of progress. Moreover, the aim is not to suffer endlessly but to cross the domain of suffering by the realisation that its roots lie in the Ignorance which separates man from his Universal and Transcendent Reality.

We also do not see eye to eye with Simone Weil about her way of getting over the human ego. She always strove to 'decreate' herself by such means as 'associating herself always with the defeated and oppressed'. This is not only a very negative method but also in its nature an endless struggle and in all probability foredoomed to failure because ego is a knot in our consciousness, or a dark shadow of our true Spiritual Personality and the knot can be loosened or the shadow dispelled by rising higher in consciousness and for that what is needed is a psychological approach and not these external occupations. Mother has said rightly, "Let the sun of aspiration dissolve the clouds of egoism". We also do not subscribe to the view that only the oppressed are the sufferers in the world and therefore deserving of our sympathy and compassion. The appearances are deceptive and the fact is, where Ignorance is, there suffering too must come. Therefore the oppressor cannot escape from the rack of suffering and if we go beneath the superfices we will be still more disillusioned to find how his whole being has been occupied by the forces of darkness such as lust, hatred and anger that goad him constantly to feed them. He, too, deserves our compassion, so that he may be freed from the clutches of the diabolical forces and may breathe in a finer atmosphere. The spiritual man's compassion will flow equally towards the oppressor and the oppressed though in the case of one it may take the form of sympathy and succour and in the case of the other the form of a bringer of downfall and a baffler of designs.

"The God of wrath, the God of Love are one",

and he who realizes this,

"He too grows Rudra fierce, august and dire,
And Shiva, sweet fulfiller of desire."

R. N. KHANNA

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